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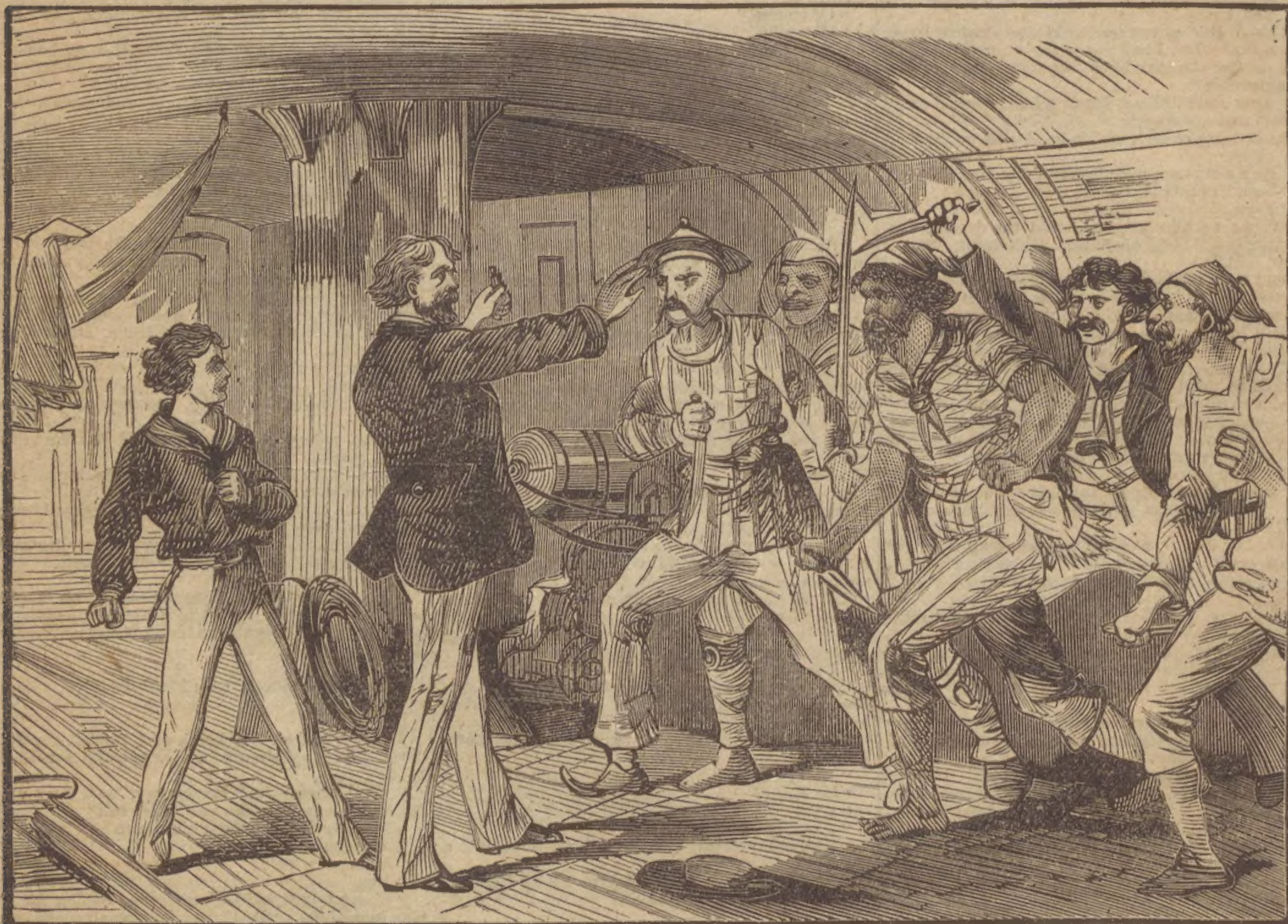
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No. 163.

Young Harkaway and the Pirates.



Knives were drawn, and the pirates moved to their destined victims. "Back!" shouted the doctor, waving his hand. And they instinctively stopped at the word.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHINESE PIRATE JUNK.

"Now, boy," said Hunston to young Jack, when once they were fairly on deck, "your father saved my life off Cuba; I have saved yours."

Young Jack smiled bitterly.

Hunston had saved his life at last, it is true, but it was to his treachery that they owed their disastrous defeat and the terrible massacre of the boat's crew.

"You see, boy," continued Hunston, in the

same contemptuous tone, "we are equal now; so look to yourself."

Young Jack made no reply.

He simply acknowledged the speech by a haughty inclination of the head, and Hunston walked off to get his hurts, which were few and trifling, attended to.

Presently several of the crew came and helped young Jack to take his companion, poor Harry Girdwood, below, where the wounded pirates were being cared for.

The unfortunate orphan boy had got some ugly cuts in the skirmish, and only great care, com-

bined with skilful treatment, could possibly bring him through.

They had a doctor on board, who was an American, and a man of some knowledge and experience.

So there was a fair chance for everybody.

The doctor looked hard at the two boys when they were brought down to the cockpit, and it was evident that their presence there excited his curiosity.

"Do you belong to this ship?" he asked, as he set methodically to work to see to Harry Girdwood's wounds.

"The pirate?" asked young Jack, in surprise.
 "Yes."
 "Not exactly, doctor," he replied. "Do we look like it?"
 The doctor frowned.
 "Don't let your tongue run away with your discretion, my young friend," he said. "if you don't care to be taken for one of the crew, keep your sentiments to yourself."
 Young Jack bit his lip.
 "The horrid old vagabond," he said to himself; "he ought to be ashamed to be seen here. I suppose his job is to murder the prisoners by slow torture when the Chinese and the Lascars can't invent anything sufficiently horrible."
 And he turned on his heel, and strode haughtily up the cabin.
 Turning around, he saw the doctor was looking steadfastly at him.
 And then he beckoned him to approach.
 Jack felt half inclined to take no notice of it, but there was a commanding look about the American doctor which the boy instinctively felt bound to obey.
 "Come here."
 Jack marched up with a sort of defiant air.
 "Well, sir?"
 "A word to the wise, my lad," said the doctor, in a low but impressive voice.
 "You cannot improve your position here by any brag or bold bearing; indeed, it is very likely to put an end to your captivity in a very summary manner, so unless you wish to walk the plank speedily, or have your head battered in, keep as civil a tongue in your head as possible."
 Young Jack hung his head, abashed at this.
 "Do you hear?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "Then pay attention," said the doctor, "and learn that what I tell you is for your own good, and not for the sake of saying anything sharp or disagreeable."
 Young Jack did not know what reply to make to this strange speech.
 So he simply nodded his head and walked up the cabin.
 "He's a strange man," thought young Jack.
 "Jack," called Harry Girdwood, faintly.
 "Yes."
 "Come to him at once," said the doctor, peremptorily. "Hold his hand. He's faint. Stand quite still."
 And then while young Jack stood holding the poor sufferer's hand, the doctor finished dressing his wounds, handling him all the while as tenderly as a fond mother might.
 Harry Girdwood strove might and main to stifle his groans; but do what he would, a murmur of anguish escaped from time to time.
 "Keep up awhile, my poor boy," said the doctor, encouragingly. "You'll be easy presently. I shall get over it as quickly as possible."
 The patient gave him a grateful look.
 "Thanks, doctor."
 "Hush, don't fatigue yourself with speaking."
 Young Jack was getting more and more puzzled now.
 Was the doctor really a humane man, and yet the associate of thieves and murderers of the lowest and vilest possible description?
 No.
 So young Jack Harkaway sagely came to this conclusion:
 "He wants to lead us into a frank avowal of our feelings," he said to himself, "in order to betray us; but I must put poor Harry on his guard."
 By this time, Harry Girdwood's wounds being dressed, he was allowed to rest, and then being thoroughly exhausted, he sank back on his pillow into a gentle slumber.
 As soon as he had watched his companion so far cared for, young Jack made for the companion ladder, and was just running up to see what was going forward on deck, when the doctor stopped him.
 "Where are you going?"
 "On deck."
 "What for?"
 "To look about."
 "Are you mad?"
 "I think not."
 "Do you know what you are likely to meet with?"
 "Where?"
 "On deck."
 "No."
 "Death."
 "Death!"
 "Yes, young gentleman, death. That makes you start. But nothing is more likely. The men you are among now are the vilest and most unscrupulous you will find. One man walked the plank but yesterday."

"Was he a Frenchman?" asked young Jack, quickly.
 "Yes."
 "I thought so, and called Monsieur Potiron?"
 "Yes," replied the doctor, in evident surprise.
 "Then you know—"
 "I know all about him. We picked him up."
 "You?"
 "Yes—our ship."
 "Good Heaven! you don't say so."
 "Yes, sir."
 "Well—well, I am glad he is saved, at all events. Poor Potiron!"
 "You knew him well."
 "Yes."
 "Was he a prisoner on board this ship?"
 "Yes."
 "Then I am glad his story was so far true, at all events."
 "Was it doubted?"
 "In some measure by our officers, for he couldn't help pulling the long bow at times."
 The doctor smiled.
 "I know."
 "He tried it on here then," said young Jack.
 "Of course, it was in the fellow's blood. He could no more help bragging and exaggerating, than a crow could help cawing. But he was not to say a coward, after all."
 "Indeed."
 "No. When his time came, and he was driven over the ship's side into the water, he showed a bold front."
 "You will excuse a question, doctor?" said Jack.
 "Certainly—but I don't promise in advance to answer it."
 "Of course."
 "Go on."
 "How came you amongst these men—doctor to a pirate ship?"
 "Can't you guess?"
 "Why, no."
 "Well, you might, my young friend, and yet be less quick-witted than I perceive you to be. How came you and your unfortunate companion here?"
 "We were surprised by treachery, and made prisoners."
 "And so was I—"
 "Indeed, doctor; I thought that they always put their prisoners to death."
 "Such is the case," returned the doctor, "in most instances; but not always immediately—or you would not be here."
 "There is a reason for my escape which I will explain to you later on."
 "And for mine, too; I was seized amidst a scene of such slaughter and such horrible carnage as I never yet witnessed before—as please God I hope never to witness again."
 "I was dragged on board the junk, and fell across a whole mob of wounded, writhing about the deck."
 "Our ship had been fought gallantly, and the slaughter of the pirates before we were beaten was something frightful."
 "One poor wretch was writhing on deck at my feet, and crying aloud with the agony of his wounds."
 "With me it is naturally a double instinct to succor the wounded: firstly, as a Christian, and secondly, as a medical man. So I looked to him—dressed and comforted his hurts—"
 "I see."
 "Then told them my profession, and I was saved, while many a poor prisoner was plundered and thrown to the sharks."
 "And how long have you been a prisoner here, doctor?" asked young Jack.
 "Nearly a year."
 "So long?"
 "Alas! yes."
 "Can you escape?"
 "I would risk my life to if there were half a chance."
 Just then, Harry Girdwood moved and groaned, and the doctor motioned young Jack to silence.
 "Our talking disturbs him," he said, in a whisper; "we must be careful, for unless he gets perfect quiet for the present, I will not answer for the poor boy's life."

CHAPTER II.

LIFE ON THE PIRATE JUNK.

PRESENTLY the doctor dozed beside his patient. His hands had been full of work and he was overcome by fatigue.
 Young Jack sat by watching him, when a great scuffling and noise on deck attracted his attention.

"I wonder what's going on there?" thought he. The noise continued, and young Jack felt half inclined to go up on deck and see for himself.
 Harry Girdwood, meanwhile, slept peacefully on.
 The doctor slept.
 Young Jack arose to stretch his legs, and every time that he moved up the cabin, he drew nearer to the companion-ladder; and presently, he mounted a step.
 Then Jack forgot all about the doctor's warning, and he stepped on to the deck.
 A great deal of bustle and confusion was going forward there.
 Some of the crew were busily engaged in swabbing the deck, to remove the unpleasant remains of the late fray.
 By the traces of blood about, he could see, plainly enough, that the battle had been fierce and fatal to the pirates, who had almost been deprived of the pleasure of a retaliation.
 So thoroughly were they taken by surprise, that the American ship, under Captain Disher's able management, had given them the hottest work that they had ever known.
 The wounded were still being helped away.
 The slain outright were dragged off without the faintest show of ceremony, and swung over into the sea.
 It was, indeed, thanks to this and similar noises, that young Jack contrived, for the present, to pass unobserved.
 The boy looked about him in every direction, but there was no sign of the vessel which he had unfortunately quitted on that forlorn hope.
 And for what?
 Glory!
 Alack! he had had his belly-full of glory by this time.
 He was no coward—far from it—yet he had learnt to feel sorry that he had ever quitted his mother's side upon that unlucky day.
 He thought of her pale face and anxious looks, and he recalled her fond injunctions that he would keep out of danger.
 He reviewed his own conduct in creeping off into the thick of the fight, and he felt inclined to take an exceedingly harsh view of it.
 "Was it true bravery after all?" he asked himself, that had prompted him.
 Was not his bravery rather foolhardiness?
 "Yes; decidedly yes," was his bitter reply to this mental questioning.
 Moving about, along the deck, he came presently across a telescope, and raising it to his eye, he quickly adjusted the focus, and swept the horizon.
 Nothing in sight.
 Yet, stay.
 There appeared one sail, many—many miles distant.
 So far, indeed, that it appeared but the very tiniest speck.
 And this, he felt sure, must be the ship which his father and mother were in.
 He fixed it through the glass, and gazed long and steadfastly through it.
 And as he looked, the speck grew smaller and smaller, until it faded utterly out of view.
 It was gone.
 And with its final disappearance, his heart sank low, indeed; and the poor boy heaved a piteous sigh of despair, as he let the glass slowly down.
 * * * * *
 A hand was placed upon his shoulder.
 "Well!"
 He started.
 Then he turned his head, and found himself close to an Englishman who was quite familiar to him.
 "Well, Master Jack Harkaway," said the man, "so you are here in the toils after all?"
 Young Jack recognized him then.
 "Emmerson!"
 "You know me?"
 "Yes."
 "Sharp boy," said Emmerson, coolly, for it was indeed he. "Don't look so scared. Are you frightened?"
 Jack answered, quickly:
 "Frightened! What of? You? No—not quite!"
 Protean Bob laughed satirically at this.
 "Bravo! Jack. You haven't lost the family brag, I perceive."
 Jack reddened to the roots of his hair.
 "Brag should be *your* name!" he said.
 "Cheeky enough," said Emmerson, turning away. "I'm afraid, my fair youth, you're short lived—too smart to live long."
 So saying, he walked up the deck, leaving young Jack to his own reflections.
 The presence of Robert Emmerson was the

most puzzling thing that had happened to him.

What could it mean?

It was difficult to hazard even a guess; he was anxious to find out how Emmerson got on board the pirate ship.

But a still greater surprise was in store for young Jack before he quitted the deck.

His attention was called to a dispute that was going on aft, so he went off at a run to see what the matter was.

It looked as though a fight was going on upon deck.

"I'm in it!" cried young Jack, in something like glee.

He could never keep clear of anything of this sort.

He shared his father's fondness for excitement, and so strong was the instinct within him that he never thought how foolish it was to flourish about the deck of the pirate ship while the wounded from the late action were scarcely yet cared for, but burst into the thick of the *melee*.

Wonders upon wonders here awaited him.

A huge fellow was knocking the seamen about like skittles.

A mammoth man, brawny and bearded.

A man that young Jack knew by sight almost as well as his own father.

Who, asks the reader, could he meet now?

Who but Toro?

The hot-tempered Italian was quarrelling with the Lascars, or the Celestials, as the Chinese call themselves.

On the present occasion, a slight dispute had arisen between them upon the question of precedence.

High words were exchanged between them.

From high words to blows is but a slight step amongst such lawless ruffians as these, so that when young Jack arrived upon the scene, they were in the middle of a most undignified scramble.

Toro's huge bulk, however, served him quite grandly at this precise amusement.

He had only to lay against them.

As well might they oppose the march of a young elephant.

But the most alarming phase in the whole affair was the incessant din which the combatants kept up.

Just imagine bad language being bellowed at each other by a dozen half-drunken men in four different tongues—to wit, Italian, Chinese, Spanish, and worse than all, Dutch.

All talking at once.

All yelling at the top of their voices.

When young Jack looked at Toro, he began to feel very much puzzled.

He had seen Toro there, stretched lifeless on the ground, and, to all appearances, dead!

He did not know how Toro had been rescued by his comrades, and snatched from the grave at the very last moment.

The whole scene was so novel, and presented such a complete change from what he had been going through until the last few hours of his life, that he began to ask himself if he were not in a dream.

He had read the legend of the "Phantom Ship," and he had a momentary fancy flash through his mind that he was, perhaps, rightly mourned as dead by his parents—that in spite of the real look of everything around him, he was out of the world, in the land of spirits, and there renewing some of the more startling scenes of his earthly career.

By what process of reasoning young Jack contrived to liken himself to the supernatural Captain Vanderdecken, we are not in a position to state.

All we can say is, that whatever wild flights his fancy may have taken, he was brought rudely back to earth by being roughly collared by Toro himself.

The giant had just caught sight of him, and was filled with amazement on recognizing him.

But recovering quickly from his surprise, he rushed at him and grabbed him sharply by the shoulder.

"Boy!"

"Well," said young Jack, looking up at him saucily, "what is it?"

Toro was staggered.

"It is young Jack Harkaway!" he exclaimed.

"Rather!" returned young Jack, nodding.

"Why, where in the fiend's name did you spring from?"

"From below," replied young Jack.

"The devil!" ejaculated the ex-brigand.

"Well, no," retorted our youthful hero, with his accustomed readiness; "not from there, although from below."

"Why, what—"

"From the cockpit, I mean," explained young Jack.

"But how came you there?"

"Prisoner."

"Then you must have been on board that American ship that has just—"

"Given this side a licking and got clear off."

Yes, Signor Toro, I was."

"And your father?"

"Yes, he, too."

"And—"

"Mr. Harvey? Yes, all of us, including Mr. Jefferson."

"Hah!"

"Your worst enemy."

"No," ejaculated Toro, sharply; "Jefferson is a brave man. He fought fairly, and he won the victory. He fully merited it. Defeat, boy, is bitter, but even Toro can learn a lesson occasionally, and I have lately learnt to know that it is an honor to oppose such a man as Jefferson, even if beaten."

Young Jack was astonished at this.

He regretted his taunting words then.

Of all the people in the world, he had certainly not expected anything like a frank or generous admission on the part of Toro.

"Nobly said, Signor Toro," said young Jack.

"And believe it or not, as you may, I am really glad to see you here, although I am quite astonished how you can have got here."

"Tell me how you came to be made prisoner. I was on deck about here the whole time, but I saw no prisoners made."

"None?"

"No."

"Did you not see the fight between the boats?"

"Well, Signor Toro," said young Jack, "a fight did take place between some of the boats. The one I commanded engaged two of the pirates' boats, and we were fast giving them pepper, when a third boat in our rear brought deserters from our own ship."

"Deserters?"

"Yes."

"So you have some traitor Americans, as well as—"

"There are good and bad everywhere, Signor Toro," continued Jack. "The boat was rowed by one deserter. The only other person in the boat was a prisoner, aided by the deserter to escape."

"I see," said Toro; "so you had a prisoner?"

"Yes; a prisoner whose life had been saved by my father off Cuba. Guess who that prisoner was."

"I cannot."

"Why, it was—"

"Me," said a voice at young Jack's elbow.

"Hunston!" exclaimed Toro, in greater amazement than ever; "is it possible, or do my eyes deceive me?"

"Not at all, old comrade," returned Hunston; "here I am—Hunston himself in the flesh."

CHAPTER III.

THE ONE-LEGGED MANDARIN AND THE MAMMOTH PIGTAIL.

"A KNOWLEDGE of their language is very useful," said Isaac Mole to Dick Harvey.

"And do you speak it, Mr. Mole?" asked Harvey.

"Not to say fluently," replied Mr. Mole, modestly.

"I had no idea, Mr. Mole, you were such a linguist," said Harvey. "So you speak Chinese?"

"You know, Richard, dialect is my strong point. You may not now remember that my knowledge of the American dialect was of considerable service to us when we landed in Boston."

Dick was ready to burst at this.

"Quite right, Mr. Mole," he said. "I remember now."

"Now, it is not vanity on my part," said Mr. Mole, in a bland, winning manner, "but I know my powers, and I can imitate the Chinese dialect and intonation so nearly that they would never take me for a foreigner—if—if—if—"

"If you only wore a pigtail," suggested Dick.

"Yes."

"Why not wear one then?" asked Harvey with great gravity.

Mr. Mole looked very straight at him.

But Dick never blenched.

He smelt fun ahead.

"So you really think it desirable, Harvey?" continued Mr. Mole.

"Of course."

"Why?"

"Why, the natives here are notorious thieves

and rogues; rob you they will if you are a foreigner and if they have only half a chance, so you decidedly gain a point by looking like one of themselves."

"I see."

"So that in their dress, and profiting by your—"

"Imitative powers, which I possess so—"

"Like a monkey."

"What?"

"I say almost like the monkeys do—"

"I object to your similes, Richard; I don't like your disrespectful way of coupling my name with that of a monkey."

"No offence, sir."

"I dare say, but—"

"Come—come, Mr. Mole, don't be so thin-skinned; I took you for a man of too much mind—"

"Quite right."

"And really, if you analyse it, I think you will admit that it is a compliment."

"Ahem!"

* * * * *

Mr. Mole used to air his Chinese upon the native coolies on the plantation, and the men, cunning enough in their way, soon learned that the best way to propitiate their chief was to pretend to understand all he said or wished to say in their own tongue.

The honest truth is, that Mr. Mole did not know much about it.

"Chin-chin," and a few phrases of "pigeon-English," had to serve for a whole vocabulary.

Mr. Mole, however, in deference to Harvey's opinion of "the proper thing to do," had his head shaved over his manly brow, and made desperate efforts to grow a pigtail.

Alas! his efforts were not seconded by nature.

All he could do, the pigtail would not be coaxed into growing a respectable length.

"No matter, my dear sir," said Dick. "What is art for?"

"Can't say," responded Mr. Mole. "What do you say?"

"To replace nature under certain conditions."

Mr. Mole rubbed his nose and pondered deeply.

He had, if the honest truth be told, taken something stronger than tea that day, and although not by any means mentally obfuscated, he felt that he was not as clear as he should wish to be as to Harvey's meaning.

He felt that he had been indulging a little, and exaggerated in his fears the effect it had taken upon him.

"Isaac Mole," he said to himself, "you must pull yourself together, or else you will have Mrs. M. about your ears. She's a good creature, but so precious strait-laced upon the question of a glass of grog more or less, that let her half suspect the least thing, and she'll look as black as—as black as—pah! Hal!

And doubts came over him.

Had he understood Harvey aright?

Now, during this long soliloquy, Dick stood looking at the tutor, asking himself whether the old gentleman smelt a rat.

"I must be wary," thought the artful Dick, "and not spoil sport by being over eager."

Then on looking again at Mr. Mole, he changed his mind.

"He's tight."

But he was wrong.

Isaac Mole was not in that condition so vulgarly, yet tersely described.

"My dear Harvey," said the tutor, "I am waiting for the last ten minutes to hear you finish your eloquent reasoning."

"Which?"

"What you began."

"Oh! I see."

"All about ature and nart—I mean nature and art. Richard—Richard," added Mr. Mole, with a half tipsy and reproving smile, "I fear you must have been indulging a bit freely to-day."

"What?"

"Dick, you're not quite clear there," said Mr. Mole, tapping his forehead significantly.

"Come—come, I say, Mr. Mole," exclaimed Harvey, indignantly.

"You know it's true."

"I know nothing of the kind. The truth is I was urging you as soberly and as reasonably as a reasoning man can to replace nature's deficiencies by a work of art."

Mole smiled.

"Ha! now we're getting back to it. Explain yourself."

"You have no pigtail. Have an artificial one made for you."

Mr. Mole stared.

"Do you mean it?"
 "Yes."
 "Truly?"
 "Why not?"
 Mr. Mole reflected for little time.
 "Why, just listen, sir," said Dick. "You admit that the object is to pass yourself off as a native Chinese?"
 "Yes."
 "For the purpose of defeating their cheating, avaricious ways?"
 "Yes—yes."
 "Well, then, every means is fair, and worth trying, I take it."
 "Perhaps you're right, Harvey," said Mr. Mole.
 "Perhaps. Why, I am sure," exclaimed Dick, with an air of perfect enthusiasm. "Now I'll tell you what, Mr. Mole."
 "What?"
 "I'll be bound that you can find artificial pig-tails ready made here."
 Mr. Mole looked very dubious at this.
 "Think so?"
 "I feel sure so. There is, in fact, I should say, a large trade done in them here. It is a natural consequence. Witness the enormous trade done in chignons in England."
 This argument appeared conclusive.
 "To be sure."
 "Well, I'll go and try to find one," said Dick.
 "Do you think it advisable? Well, perhaps—but don't get a very long one."
 "Why not?"
 "As I'm not used to it."
 "If I wore one at all myself," said Dick, "I should wear it down to the ground."
 "You would?" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "And why?"
 "Because these savages call all of the short-haired people barbarians."
 "I know."
 "And they measure their respect for a man by the length of his pigtail."
 Mr. Mole burst out laughing at this idea. It tickled him uncommonly.
 He fairly roared, and Dick had some trouble to keep his own countenance.
 "When you have quite done, sir," he said, trying to look severe.
 "Oh, don't—don't, Harvey!" cried the tutor, while the tears ran down his cheeks; "I can't stand that."
 "Mr. Mole, you always seem to treat lightly any information I have gleaned and wish to impart."
 "No—no."
 "I say you do."
 "Come—come, Harvey, no offense is meant—only—"
 "I know what it is; you can never forget that you were the tutor, I the scholar, and you feel ashamed of gleaning any information from me."
 Mr. Mole was touched at this.
 "My dear Harvey," he said, "I know we are never too old to learn."
 "Then you may gain knowledge, even at your advanced age."
 Mr. Mole looked severe, now, in his turn.
 "Don't be personal, Harvey."
 "I won't. But laugh as you may, I don't see that there is so much to laugh at, in the measuring of a man's intelligence by the length of his pigtail."
 "Why, Harvey?"
 "Well, do you remember what it says in the Bible about Samson?"
 "Well, no, I don't—not at this precise moment."
 "It says that his strength lay in his hair."
 "So it does!"
 And leaving Mr. Mole sharply, on this effect, it served as a clinching argument.
 Dick went after the pigtail.
 Need we say that he had not far to go?
 Of course not.
 He had had it carefully stored up for some time past, ready for the moment that he should have prepared Mr. Mole for it by subtle reasoning.
 Dick called a meeting of his party generally, and all attended, with the exception of the Harkaways—Jack and Emily.
 The bereaved parents of poor young Jack had no heart for fun.
 You must not suppose from this that the others had forgotten our daring young hero.
 No, they had never ceased to mourn his loss.
 But to Harvey, fun came as natural as his food, and the rest of the party shared his predilection in this particular.
 "I have persuaded old Mole to wear the pigtail," said Dick, when all were assembled, "and here it is."

"Isn't it a beauty?" exclaimed Jefferson.
 "A real gem!" cried the rest in a chorus.
 "Rather large, isn't it, Mr. Harvey?" said Pike.
 "A whacker!"
 "He'll never wear that!"
 "It may put him on his guard, and spoil the joke altogether," suggested Magog Brand.
 "Never fear."
 "He must be very groggy if he puts that on," said Nabley.
 "Not very," replied Dick; "I have carefully prepared the way."
 "I'll bet a sovereign you never get him to wear it."
 "Done."
 "You take me?"
 "Yes, it is a bet."
 "I want to win a little money," said Jefferson.
 "I have you for ten dollars."
 "Done again."
 So the gambling fit beginning, went all round, and Dick made bets with each.
 "Now for it," said he, "but you mustn't breathe a word that might spoil sport."
 "No—no!"
 "Of course not."
 "I shall be only too glad to lose my bet," said Jefferson; "the fun will be cheap at the price."
 "Well, then," said Dick, "I'll not only make him wear it, but I'll bring him before you as a real 'Heathen Chinee!'"
 * * * * *
 Dick returned to Mole with the pigtail.
 "It is rather an unusual size, Harvey," began the tutor.
 "Not at all," replied Dick, coolly.
 "They never wear them so large as this one, though."
 "Not the coolies, nor the common Chinese. But the mandarins and the regular celestial swells do; longer, in fact."
 "Come, I say."
 "It's a fact, sir, only I thought you wouldn't care for a longer one until you got better used to it."
 "I should think not," ejaculated Mole.
 "Come, sir, try it on."
 Mole paused.
 He did not really quite relish the idea.
 "I don't positively think, Harvey, that I can bring myself to put that monstrous thing on. Why, it's like the great sea serpent that superstitious mariners talk of."
 Harvey frowned, and looked sulky at this.
 "Well, good morning, Mr. Mole," he said, moving towards the door.
 "Are you going?"
 "Yes."
 "Really I'm sorry to give you so much trouble."
 "Oh, don't mention it," said Dick, with affected coldness, "only you won't catch me wasting my time in a hurry again; good morning."
 "Stop a minute, my dear Harvey. You really are so very hasty."
 "Well."
 He paused suddenly at the door without turning around.
 "You are not joking?"
 Dick was fit to split, but he managed to preserve an immobile and severe expression.
 "Mr. Mole, there are seasons for everything. You appear to look upon me as a species of baboon."
 "Harvey!"
 "So you do. Do you think I waste all my time in idle levity, sir? How long have I been pelting all over the place to find you that, and now you—pah! I am disgusted."
 And he moved on.
 "Stop—stop!"
 "Well, sir?"
 "I'll put it on, Harvey, if you assure me on your honor—"
 Dick frowned.
 "Such a speech, Mr. Mole, I wouldn't have tolerated from anyone but an old and valued friend. It implies a doubt of my veracity."
 "Dear—dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, in sore distress at wounding Dick's feelings. "I'll put it on then."
 "Not to please me."
 "Then I will to please myself; only stay a moment."
 And so, by degrees, Dick was even persuaded into fitting it on, so good-natured, and easily mollified did he appear.
 "Doesn't it hang down a very long way?" asked Mr. Mole, nervously.
 "Not very."
 "I think I'd like it coiled up at first."
 "Very well."
 So Dick coiled it up, and finished Mr. Mole's

toilet *à la Chinoise* with the grace and dexterity of a barber of Peking.
 Mr. Mole surveyed himself in the glass.
 "Well, really, Harvey, I think your judgment is correct after all," he said, graciously.
 "I thought so."
 "Quite."
 "You prefer to have it coiled up, I suppose?"
 "Well, eh; now that I am getting a bit used to it, suppose you let it down again."
 "Very well," answered Dick, quite delighted with his success, "since you wish it, sir, as the ghost says to Hamlet—'I will a tale unfold.'"
 "Don't joke, Harvey."
 "Certainly not."
 "Which is best?" demanded Mr. Mole, after a lengthy study of his personal appearance in the glass.
 "Well, my candid opinion is that way," answered Dick, with a very critical look.
 "You think so?"
 "I'm sure so."
 "I hardly know," said Mr. Mole, hesitatingly.
 "I'm so positive," said Dick, "that I'll undertake to pass you before all our friends as a native mandarin."
 Mr. Mole took alarm at this.
 He felt mischief in the suggestion.
 "Nonsense!"
 "I'll wager you ten pounds that they won't recognize you," persisted Dick.
 "Ten pounds?"
 "Yes."
 "Stake your money."
 Dick did so.
 "Now you must keep your countenance, and not make any sign that would betray you."
 "Trust me."
 * * * * *

Mandarin Mole, gorgeously arrayed in a purple silk sack-tunic, and brown skin trousers worn low so as to conceal his wooden leg, and with his long pigtail dangling, passed out, accompanied by Harvey.

In an adjoining room all the party arose.
 "His excellency, the Mandarin Chung Ike Mole," said Harvey, with the air of a grand chamberlain.

The whole party bowed with every appearance of great respect.

Mandarin Mole passed on, accompanied by his escort, bowing condescendingly.

And so they passed out of the room.

"What do you think of that, Mr. Mole?" asked Dick, triumphantly.

"A perfect success!" ejaculated Mole.

"I should think so."

"They were all quite deceived."

"That they were."

Mandarin Mole chuckled to himself.

"I cannot refrain, my dear Harvey," said the new mandarin, bubbling with laughter, "from a vulgar idiom, although I don't usually indulge myself in such things."

"Fire away," said Dick, "and ease yourself for once."

"I mean to say, Harvey, that in the Cockney slang, we had them alive."

"Had 'em, sir," said Dick, getting yet more slangy—"had 'em on toast."

CHAPTER IV.

A LESSON IN REAL CHINESE.

MONDAY entered.

"Well, Monday?" said Harvey. "What now?"
 "Hyar's a Chinee swell, sar, dat want to see Massa Mole."

Harvey tipped Monday the wink on the sly, that is, unseen by Mandarin Mole.

"Mr. Mole is not here at present, Monday," replied Dick.

"Sare?"

"But he will be here shortly."

"Shall I ax the Chinee swell to walk in, sare?"

"Yes."

With that Monday disappeared.

"Now, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, with a great show of anxiety, "this is the time to distinguish yourself."

"How?"

"By letting him see you are up to everything."

"But do you know who it is?" demanded Mr. Mole, nervously.

"No."

"I can guess."

"Who is it then?"

"A sort of shipping agent who is to arrange about chartering a vessel for me."

"What's his name?"
"Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming."
"Is he a merchant?"
"He's a kind of shipbroker. He has been recommended to me by some friends here, and is a most reliable person."

Without any more ado, therefore, the shipbroker was admitted.

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming was a remarkable-looking person.

He wore a very broad-brimmed hat which shaded his face, but did not quite conceal an ugly scar across his forehead.

He had no pigtail, but wore his hair, which was coarse as horsehair and jet black, very short.

He had no eyebrows, nor, indeed, any hair on his face at all; but his skin was so dark that he looked like a mulatto.

This was the chief characteristic that Dick Harvey noticed.

"He is certainly a rum one," said he to himself.

"Is his excellency present?" demanded the visitor in English, but with a very strong accent, after a pause.

Harvey looked.

There was a tone in the voice of Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming that rang in his ears.

Was it a familiar tone to him?

Query.

Dick was a rare fellow for fancying that he traced likenesses between folks.

This fancy had often led him into small scrapes, so that, being aware of his weakness, he was in a measure prepared to combat it, and to persuade himself that it was nothing but fancy.

"His excellency, Mr. Mole, sent for me," said Biga-Eng; "may his servant ask the motive?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Mole, cheerfully.

"You speak English, too?" said Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming, turning to Mandarin Mole in unfeigned surprise.

"Oh, yes."

"I, too, have been much with Englishmen."

"Much with Englishmen, have you, indeed?" said Dick Harvey, looking steadfastly at Biga-Eng.

"Yes."

"Been in England?"

"Yes," replied the shipbroker, who looked extremely confused, and at last fiercely laid his hand upon a short curved sword he wore by his side.

"Halloo, Master Chinaman!" exclaimed Dick Harvey, noticing the threatening motion of the Celestial towards his sword; "what do you mean by that?"

"Excellency——" he stammered.

"Do you mean to threaten me?" asked Dick, half drawing a revolver from his pocket.

"Certainly not, excellency, but some years ago I received such treatment from a party of your countrymen that I am almost mad when I think about it."

"Oh, indeed! Pray what did they do?"

"Pardon; it is a long story, and it will not make you proud of your countrymen, so let me proceed to business. You sent for me."

"Yes."

"For——"

"For the purpose of getting rates quoted," said Harvey, "and learning the dates of the different ships engaged in this trade—that is all."

"Good, sir. I can give them to you when you please."

"Now, then."

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming referred to a small pocket-book he carried before he made answer:

"There is the *Maria Theresa* on the twenty-third."

"The twenty-third. That will about suit," said Mr. Mole.

"On the twenty-fourth we have another departure."

"The name of the vessel, if you please."

"The 'Franz Josef.'"

"Austrian?"

"Yes."

"Both?"

"Yes."

"Now," said Dick, who had a double motive for his next proposition, "suppose you and Mr. Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming arrange about the rates."

"Freight?"

"Yes."

"Very good."

"Make your prices in his language," said Dick to Mr. Mole.

"What for?" asked the latter, nervously.

"He'll be more at home, of course, and it will be just the same to you."

"Why, of course—very nearly the same thing, that is."

"So I said."

Then Dick pulled the Chinese aside a few paces, and said to him in a low voice:

"Will you talk to him in your own language?"

"Why?"

"To please him."

"Do I not speak English well enough for you?"

"Oh, yes."

"And does not his excellency understand me thoroughly?"

"Yes."

"Then why change our language at all?"

"There is nothing very serious in it, my good sir," replied Harvey. "But Mandarin Mole is a great linguist in our country. He talks every tongue, and he told me on the quiet, that is, between ourselves, just now, that *he did not believe you were a Chinaman.*"

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming gave the speaker a curious glance.

He felt uncomfortable, apparently.

Dick watched him.

Not a look of his, not the faintest change in his expression escaped Harvey.

For the latter's suspicions were aroused.

"I'll wager anything," said he to himself, "that they are both humbugs—he as great as Mole and Mole as great as he. Hang me if I don't try them!"

So turning again to the shipbroker, he addressed him in the following extraordinary idiom:

"Chin Chin."

"Chin Chin," responded Biga-Eng, promptly.

"Exactly," said Dick, "Chin Chin talkee—talkee, pongo wong, cow cross, cum roce pork."

"Oh, yes."

"Do you think so, Mr. Mole?" asked Dick.

The tutor was a bit puzzled, but he made a wild hit at it.

"Very much, indeed."

"I thought so," said Dick, gravely.

Then he went on staring hard at Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming, who was fast waxing very unhappy.

"Chin Chin, youra braceofrof alumb ugsum ustown? Eh?"

"Decidedly," said Mr. Mole, eagerly.

"Quite right."

"I thought so," said Dick, looking more serious than ever.

"I had no idea you spoke the language, Harvey," said Mr. Mole.

"I thought not."

"Most fluent," said Biga-Eng, politely.

"You flatter," said Harvey, diffidently.

"Oh, no."

"Well," said Dick, "I have only to add that Chin Chin talkee—talkee birdsnest or finerat cum pickleggwalk ickeraboo an chapelle blanche orfulduf fers bo thovu."

"Oh, precisely," said Mole, "just my opinion. Eh, sir?"

"Decidedly," responded Biga-Eng.

"I felt sure that you would agree with me," said Dick.

"Quite right."

"Great fluency," said Biga-Eng to Mole.

"Wonderful," responded Mr. Mole.

Dick enjoyed it mightily, as you may suppose.

"The thundering old humbugs!" he said to himself. "I'll lead them a precious dance yet."

The sham Chinese shipbroker now began fidgeting about.

Evidently he wanted to be off.

But Dick would not let him go just yet.

"Chin Chin," said he.

"Chin Chin," replied Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming.

"Pinkey winke oky in long acre chung drury lane and bumfit co perriwig in baggynails," said Dick, addressing Mr. Mole with great apparent earnestness; "to which I may add, keri ki ko thum an' there ugo cherribobin an' berrymee damently."

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "no one could deny the truth of that."

"No one," said the shipbroker, thus appealed to.

"Well, Harvey, we are quite agreed," said the tutor, "so that settles it."

"Just so."

"I will send you the table of the rates," said Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming.

"Very good."

"As soon as possible," said Harvey.

And then the shipbroker made a low salaam, and took his leave.

Upon this, Harvey followed him out, and watched discreetly where he went to.

CHAPTER V.

WHO LAUGHS LAST?

Who could be happier?
Who more satisfied than the three of them?
Each fancied that he had hoodwinked the other two.

"I've humbugged Master Dick Harvey most completely this time," said Isaac Mole. "He won't try it on again with me in a hurry. I got out of it with even more than my accustomed skill and readiness. But really, I should never have imagined that he was so very proficient in the Chinese language. He took me completely by surprise."

"I've rather worried the two of them this time," said Dick Harvey, to himself; "but old Mole ought to have a severe lesson for his lying and brag. He's not had it half taken out of him as yet. I must manage something yet to worry him. And as for that other scamp—for I feel sure he is a scamp—I should like to show him up. I'm positive he is a thorough imposter. I must give it to him. But the first step is to find out who he is, now that I know where he lives. I feel as though I had known him wonderfully well some time or another. But when? That's the question."

Biga-Eng hurried home, and once safely indoors, he dropped into a cushion on the ground and gave vent to his feelings, which had considerably changed since leaving Harvey and Mole.

"Harvey!" he ejaculated, "and old Mole. Of all the bad luck in the world, nothing could be so bad as this; why, I shouldn't wonder that Jack Harkaway is with them. If they are all here, it will soon be the end of me. They never let a poor devil have a chance with their precious virtue, but so far I have the advantage of them. I know of their presence, but they will never dream who Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming can be."

But presently a smile crossed his evil face.

He thought of a scheme for making a good bag of money in a single stroke and taking a "rise out of old Ikey Mole," as he expressed it, all under one.

"The twenty-third," he said to himself. "Well, I can't be too early with my warning to them. I must send them a letter now, and then make sure of old Mole, the silly old pump!"

And then the shipbroker sat himself down, and addressed a letter to one Chung Ali, now the commander of the *Flowery Land*, a heavy war-junk, cruising about the China Seas, and said to be as suspicious a craft as any afloat.

Later on, you will see the results brought about by this letter.

CHAPTER VI.

DANGER!

To return to young Jack.
On board the *Flowery Land*, all went on quietly enough for the present.

The reaction after the fatal fight with the American ship under Captain Clemmens insured this.

Young Jack managed to take advantage of a short conversation between Toro and some of the Lascar seamen—preparatory to a renewal of their scramble, be it remarked—to steal off and make for the cabin again.

Harry Girdwood still slept on.

The doctor, however, had just woke up.

"Well, young gentleman," said he, gruffly, "so you have thought fit to disobey orders?"

"Orders, doctor," said young Jack in surprise.

"Did I not say——"

"Yes—yes, doctor," returned young Jack, interrupting him; "you were good enough to give me advice. Had you given me an order, I should not have thought of disobeying you."

The doctor smiled.

"You're as artful as you are plucky, my lad," he said; "only there is no merit, bear in mind, in risking one's life needlessly."

"I'm not ungrateful for your kindness, doctor," Jack said; "but really I could not control my curiosity, and so I——"

"And so you chose to thrust your head into the lion's mouth?"

"Not quite that, doctor," said young Jack. "I only went about to take observations."

"With what result?"

"I did not learn a great deal," said young Jack.

"I thought not."

"I only recognized among the crew an old enemy."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. A man I felt sure was dead long ago. I left him covered with wounds, and with scarcely a breath of life in him a few weeks since near New York."

At the mention of New York a smile of mingled pleasure and pain flitted over the doctor's face.

"Do you know New York, doctor?" asked Jack.

"Do I know New York?" iterated the doctor. "Why, I was born there. I have lived there two-thirds of my life—do I know New York? Well, no. I did know it, but I question if I shall ever know it again; ever say 'How are you?' to any of my many friends there."

And his voice grew more and more sad as he concluded with a deep-drawn sigh.

Young Jack was touched.

He thought that he would cheer the doctor up.

"You don't like your quarters here, doctor?"

"No."

"Why haven't you tried to escape, then?"

The doctor shook his head gravely, as he answered:

"No chance of that, you will see by-and-by. They watch me for the same reason that they saved my life, when they murdered all the poor crew and passengers aboard our ship."

"Why?"

"Because, as a doctor, I am useful to them."

"I see."

"They watch me night and day! That little Frenchman—"

"Hypolite Potiron," said young Jack.

"Yes."

"What of him?"

"He spoiled my chance, if ever I had one."

"How?"

"By his clumsy attempt to poison or drug the whole ship's company."

"Why was he spared, then?" asked young Jack.

"Because, as a cook, he was a desirable acquisition to the crew of this slaughter-house. But he was too precipitate; he soon grew impatient of his bondage, and he was clumsy in his attempts to get free of it. He dosed them so awkwardly that it was discovered at once, or nearly so."

"And how was it discovered, doctor?"

"By them all growing bad of the same complaint at once. A little more patience, and the vessel would have been in our hands—drifted, in spite of them, into the hands of the authorities."

"I see."

"And so there would have been an end to these wretches, whose sole delight, apparently, is bloodshed—useless brutality—slaughter."

Just then, Harry Girdwood began to talk in his sleep, and to grow restless.

The doctor, with his finger on his lips, motioned Jack to silence.

"He is feverish to-night. But unless I am deceived, he will be better by the morning."

"You think so?" said young Jack, eagerly.

"Yes."

Young Jack withdrew to the other end of the cabin, and sat down to reflect upon the doctor's words.

For Jack, be it understood, had made up his mind that he would by some means or other leave the dreadful pirate ship.

"If that clumsy little Frenchman so nearly accomplished it," he said to himself, "surely, with care, it could be brought off by the doctor."

And by degrees this became his one fixed idea.

He fixed that part in his head, and from that moment he set himself steadily and systematically to work to find out the best means to accomplish it.

"I must be more cautious than old Potiron," he said to himself. "I won't make a step unless I have the doctor's advice and consent. His coolness and shrewdness, with a little dash of my desperation, would be sure to manage it."

"But I must not think of doing anything for the present."

He could not conscientiously set to work actively in this matter until Harry Girdwood was able to accompany him.

Once let his young comrade be on the fair road to recovery, and something should be done.

So he resolved.

Now, therefore, he had a double motive for desiring his comrade's speedy restoration to health.

And so he watched anxiously every phase of Harry's illness, and followed the good doctor's movements—ay, even the expression of his open countenance, with almost breathless interest.

The doctor saw this.

And seeing, he managed to profit by it.

He invited young Jack's attention—explained to him learnedly the nature of the evils he had to fight against, in the treatment of his patient.

In this way he contrived to keep young Jack down in the cabin for the present, and out of harm's way.

CHAPTER VII.

A SPLIT IN THE CAMP.

MEANWHILE some other matters transpired on deck upon which young Jack Harkaway had by no means reckoned.

Toro was, from the first moment that he saw our young hero, all agog for settling him at once.

"Hang him up to the yard-arm," suggested the amiable ex-brigand, "or drop him over the ship's side with a six-pound shot tied to his heels, and let us get rid of the vermin."

"Why be in such a hurry?" asked Hunston.

"Because I loathe the sight of his face and the sound of his voice."

"So do I."

"Then why not make an end of it at once?"

"Because we may make better use of him."

"Bah! These Harkaways have as many lives as a cat. They have the devil's luck and their own, too. He'll bring some mischief to us unless we are careful."

"That's just what I say. Let us be careful."

"And begin by cutting the brat's throat."

"Not quite that."

"What then?"

"By squeezing particulars out of him about his father—about their ship—find out its destination, and watch for them."

"What then?"

Hunston stared at him contemptuously.

"What then! Can you ask?"

"I do ask."

"Once found out, we could, perhaps, get the whole of them into our power; think of that."

Toro's eyes sparkled.

"That would be glorious!" he exclaimed.

"Of course."

"Suppose we have him up and make him tell at once?"

Hunston shook his head.

"No good."

"Why?"

"He wouldn't tell."

"How do you mean to get at it, then?"

"By slow degrees. The boy will let it fall if we only allow him to brag a bit. He can't help bragging; it's in the Harkaway blood, and then we shall know all we want to know."

Toro frowned.

"I could name a way of getting to know what you want at once."

"Indeed."

"Yes."

"Out with it then," said Hunston, impatiently, "or I shall begin to think that you are tinged with the weakness of the Harkaways."

"What?"

"Brag."

Toro swore a fierce oath, and drew his knife as though he meant to carve up Hunston for his temerity without delay.

But Hunston feared him not.

He only laughed derisively at him.

"Give me the boy for ten minutes," said Toro, finding his companion in crime was not frightened.

"What then?"

"I'll pledge my life that he'll make a clean breast of all he knows."

"Pah! or lose his own life, I suppose."

"No."

"I say yes."

"I swear he should tell all, and in less than ten minutes. Hunston, you ever treat my suggestions with contempt."

"Not more than they merit," retorted the other.

Toro's eyes flashed lightning, and he bit his lip till the blood came.

Few men but Hunston would have said this with impunity.

"Give the brat over to me," he said, controlling his rage, "and you shall see."

"Hark you, Toro," said Hunston, deliberately, "to give the boy over to your keeping would be about as sensible as to drop a jewel coffer into the sea, because I couldn't find out the secret to open it."

"I promise—"

"I tell you," returned Hunston, "that you know as little of that boy's temper as of your own. Why, he would never speak."

"Bah!"

"Never. You would tear him limb from limb. The cruelest tortures could not make him wag his obstinate tongue unless he chose. He has too much of his father in him. Once arouse their vanity in this particular, and he would die like a young martyr at the stake."

"Martyr—stuff! You're mad, Hunston!"

"And you, Toro, are a hot-headed fool!"

And so with these mutual and frank expressions of displeasure the companions in villany separated.

"I must look after that Italian idiot," said Hunston, to himself. "He'll spoil all else for the sake of killing the boy."

"Vain ass!" muttered Toro, as he was left alone. "Since he will not give his help or approval, it shall be done without him. I'll see the rest of them, and hear what they have to say about it."

He walked aft in high dudgeon, and ran across Robert Emmerson, who was engaged in earnest conversation with Von Koppenhaagen.

"Ah, Emmerson," said Toro, "did you know that we have bagged a prize?"

"Which?"

"Young Jack Harkaway, to be sure."

"Stale news," replied Emmerson. "I've seen him."

"Vat!" ejaculated Von Koppenhaagen, "young Jag Hargavay! Ter tuyvel!"

Emmerson laughed at the Dutchman's vehement expression.

"Not quite the devil, Kop," said he. "Only one of his imps."

"His imps! I know it vell. Dat ist zer goot!" cried the Dutchman. "He make us to danze in der Bowery mit his shtink droo der hole in der vall."

"Perhaps it wasn't him," said Emmerson.

"Soh! ja woh! vell, he make us to danze; ve shall hang him so higher as Haman."

"May he die of the caper in his heel," said Emmerson, laughing.

"Ja—ja!" cried Von Koppenhaagen, "dat ist zo. Der caber in his heel is ver' fonny."

"I'll go bail," replied Emmerson, drily, "that the boy won't see the joke of it."

Toro looked on, and smiled in grim satisfaction.

Emmerson and the Dutchman were apparently just in the humor to work with him, and thwart Hunston.

"Now the next thing is to inform some of the crew. Once let them know that this boy's father led the attack on them—and this is sure, for Harkaway is the master spirit in every daring enterprise that takes place near him—and they won't stand any nonsense. I thirst to see his carcase dangling in the sun."

He sought out for his present purpose an Armenian, called Kappa, who was a petty officer of the pirates, and just the man he wanted.

It needed very little to incite the crew against young Jack Harkaway.

The bare mention of the fact that his father was the prime mover in the attack upon them was quite sufficient.

They called a meeting upon deck at once, and a council was held as to the kind of death that our hero was to suffer.

Thus the matter was taken completely out of the hands of Emmerson, Toro, and Von Koppenhaagen.

"We have decided, gentlemen," said the Armenian, who was as full of grace as a courtier, instead of being coarse and brutal like the great majority of his comrades.

"What?" demanded Robert Emmerson.

"How the boy is to die."

"Might you not have consulted me?"

"Pardon me," returned this genteel pirate, suavely, "it is our prisoner."

"And ours too."

"Nay."

"Well—well," said Emmerson, "it is idle losing one's temper over a question of form. What do you propose doing with young Harkaway?"

"Hanging him up."

"Yes."

"But not as you proposed. We mean to suspend him to the yard arm by the ankles, and use him as a target."

Protean Bob smiled grimly at this.

"There is some fancy about that notion," said he, "and I am with you."

A party was sent in search of young Jack, and soon it transpired that the prisoner was in the cabin with the American doctor.

Six men, headed by the Armenian officer Kap-

pa, trotted off down the companion ladder, to find themselves face to face with young Harkaway himself.

"Come," said Kappa, clapping him on the shoulder.

"Where?" asked young Jack.

"On deck."

The boy felt just a little bit uncomfortable.

"What do you want with him?" demanded the doctor.

"Pardon me, medico," returned the ever polite pirate, "that is our business."

"In that case," said the American doctor, coolly, "the boy remains here."

"Who says so?"

"I."

"Are you sure, doctor," said the polite Armenian, "that you are in your full senses?"

"Quite."

"Bah!"

His politeness momentarily gave way to this slightly contemptuous expression, and he motioned to his men to bear young Jack off.

But this was not altogether easy to do.

Young Jack was as slippery as an eel.

Down he wriggled on to the ground, toppled over two or three of the ruffians, and scrambling through the confused heap, he bounded over to the doctor.

"Come, doctor," said the Armenian, "don't you interfere. We wish to treat you with every respect, but if you do not stand aside, we shall have to be very rough with you."

"Begone!"

"Come—come."

They advanced menacingly.

"Hark you," said the doctor, "if you go now, at once, I will say nothing of this outrage. Linger a moment longer, and I shall complain to the captain."

"What!" cried one of the Lascars, "does the old medico presume to threaten us?"

"Down with him!" cried the rest.

Now the polite Armenian tried to stay them. But in vain.

Knives were drawn, and ugly words were bandied, and the pirates moved to their destined victims.

"Back!" said the doctor, waving his hand.

And they instinctively stopped at the word.

"You see this little phial," said the doctor, calmly; "that contains what would end not merely your wretched lives, but those of the whole ship. I have but to let it fall, and you are annihilated. In less than two minutes there would not remain a fragment of your miserable carcasses, or a plank of the ship."

The men shrank back aghast.

"Begone!"

It was a sight to see those bold bullies with blanched cheeks and quaking limbs, retreat before the stern old American, and crawl up the ladder out of the way.

Young Jack turned to the old American and embraced him.

"Oh, sir," he cried, "how can I ever thank you enough? You have saved my life!"

The old American patted his head kindly.

"I ask no more than to have saved you, my boy," he said. "I cannot tell you how much I am gratified. Do you want to gratify me in return?"

"Tell me how I can, sir," he replied eagerly.

"By heeding my counsels in future."

"I will."

The old doctor regarded the boy with a curious expression for a few moments.

He was studying his character in his face, and he soon made up his mind.

"Yes—yes," he said, "I'll trust you, Jack. If ever I knew a noble boy, well—well, I mustn't compliment you. I shall make you vain."

Two days elapsed without adventure.

Harry Girdwood mended rapidly.

In eight days, according to the worthy old doctor, he would be fit to get about.

This was grand news to both the boys.

Young Jack was full of fancies and wild schemes of escaping, and he felt that, backed by Harry Girdwood, he should be able to bring one of his daring and dangerous plans to a head.

On board the pirate ship Jack and his American friend lived quietly enough for a few days.

No other attempt was made by Toro or his vile associates to get possession of the boy, who from that time lived at peace in the surgeon's cabin.

One morning Jack and the doctor were startled from their sleep by the sound of a cannon being fired overhead.

The doctor went to inquire into the cause of it, and he discovered that they were signaling a small ship.

"Another victim," said the doctor, with a

sigh; "more prey for these insatiable murderers. Brutal ruffians! when will these scenes of bloodshed and wholesale murder come to an end?"

The doctor and young Jack watched the strange ship with considerable eagerness, and they were filled with vain regrets when they saw it lured to its doom.

"I would be a Christian work to warn them," said the old doctor.

"It would indeed," replied young Jack, "but how?"

Plan after plan was thought of and dismissed, for the simple reason that it would be dangerous to them, and perhaps risk the safety of those whom they wished to preserve.

"I have a plan," said young Jack, after a time.

"What is it?"

"We could write them a letter," he began.

"Of course," said the doctor, interrupting him with a sad smile, "we could write a letter, but the postage presents some difficulty."

"Don't be impatient, doctor; I'm coming to that."

"What would you do?"

"I have read of shipwrecked people telling the world of their troubles by means of a letter fastened in a bottle."

"They might not pick it up," said the doctor.

"True, sir; but on the other hand they might."

The doctor brooded long and earnestly over it.

"Perhaps it is worth a chance," he said.

And so they made up their minds to try it.

But just as they were making their preparations, young Jack discovered that the strange ship had lowered a boat, and was going to send some men on board.

"Now they will discover all about it for themselves," said the doctor.

"Do you think so?" asked young Jack.

"They must be blind as bats not to discover all about it," said the doctor. "Half a glance ought to tell them as plainly as we could."

"It ought to."

"At all events," said the American doctor, "we may have an opportunity of putting them upon their guard once they came on board. The only thing is to act with the greatest possible prudence, and then we may be of some good to them."

"You may count upon my caution, doctor," responded young Jack, earnestly.

"I do."

And the boy was fully resolved to take the old gentleman's advice before he made the least step in the matter.

* * * * *

Not very long after this the boat from the strange ship pulled alongside the *Flowery Land*, and the officer in command of the boat came on board.

Young Jack could not repress his curiosity.

At all hazards he determined to learn all he could.

He crept up the companion ladder on to the deck, and profited by the general attention of the pirate crew being engaged by the new-comer to get close up.

And then he perceived that the officer in question was dressed in the loose trousers and gaiters, such as are worn by the inhabitants of some of the Chinese islands, but his countenance was rather of the European cast than that of the dull-faced, heavy-eyed Oriental.

"He looks almost like an Englishman," thought young Jack in some surprise.

And this was in some measure confirmed the next moment by hearing the officer address them in his language.

"This is the *Flowery Land*, I believe?" he said.

"Yes," replied one of the Lascar officers.

"And is commanded by Captain Lin-Van-San?"

"Yes."

"I have a letter for his excellency."

"Well," thought young Jack, "that's a rum go calling a pirate his excellency. What next?"

The next surprised him even more.

"His excellency will grant you an audience, I dare say," said the Lascar lieutenant.

"That is my wish."

"Give me your letter—"

"I cannot do that, it is against orders. I had particular instructions to give it into the hands of his excellency, the captain, and none else."

The Lascar lieutenant smiled.

"Very well, I will seek the captain and ascertain his pleasure."

Now the officer from the boat was in luck.

His excellency, the Captain Lin-Van-San, graciously deigned to put in an appearance.

The captain of the *Flowery Land* was a formidable-looking fellow.

He stood nearly six feet high, was broad-shouldered in proportion, and was fierce in aspect.

He wore around his middle a broad sash of grey crape, in which were stuck enough knives and pistols to stock a small armorer's store.

The captain did not wear his hair in Chinese fashion, that is, shaved off the front of the head, and gathered in a long pigtail; he let his hair grow like the Europeans, and this with the Chinese is usually a sign of mourning.

The officer from the boat made a profound obeisance as the dread captain advanced.

"You bring me a letter," said he, in good English.

"Yes, your excellency," replied the strange officer.

"From whom?"

"A friend and humble servant of your excellency," was the reply.

"His name?"

"Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming. It is of high importance."

"Give it to me."

The captain took the letter and handed it to the Lascar officer, who had been to announce the visit of the strange vessel.

"Read."

The officer bowed, opened the letter, and read aloud as follows:

"The *Franz Josef* will leave upon the twenty-third, and the cargo will be rich. The *Flowery Land* is too well-known to venture about our latitudes, but let your other vessels be on the watch. *Flowery Land* is watched for. Be upon your guard; a British ship is on the lookout for you. Beware of her. The accursed British are a terror to the rovers of the sea. Avoid them as you would the plague. They have pushed the emperor to aid in the pursuit of the *Flowery Land*. Need I say how important it is that you should be quick?"

"Your devoted servant to command,

"BIGA-ENG-MING-MING."

The captain frowned.

"These British are very meddlesome."

"They are, sir."

"And is that all?"

"No, sir; there is yet a postscript at the end."

"Go on."

"The postscript says that besides carrying a regular captain, the *Franz Josef* will bear on board the owner of the plantation of whom mention has been frequently made."

"I remember him well," said the captain; "he has a wooden leg."

Young Jack started.

He thought of his poor old tutor, Isaac Mole.

"Go on."

"It's more than likely, too, that two rich Americans will be of the party, and an Englishman so wealthy that he can pay a princely ransom."

"He should have given all their names," said the captain.

"One moment, captain," said the Lascar; "he does; here are names, but I can scarcely read them. The Americans are called Jep—Jep—no, not Jep—Jefferson—I see, and Magog Brand."

Young Jack could scarcely refrain from crying out aloud.

"The Englishmen are called Harvey and Jack Harkaway," pursued the lieutenant, "and both are desperate men, but rich; and the men are worth more than the whole cargo of the *Franz Josef* by reason of the ransom that they can be made to disgorge if they are handled judiciously. All this your excellency can get confirmed by either of my friends whom I am given to understand have found you by now, either Ostani, or Toro."

"Good," said the captain, "call Toro."

And then the burly Italian came slouching along the deck to where the party stood around the commander of the pirates.

"Toro."

"Captain."

"Do you know these names? Tell him, Salvatore; I can scarce pronounce those barbarous names."

"Harvey?"

"Yes."

"Harkaway?"

"Yes."

"Magog Brand?"

"Yes."

"Jefferson?"

"Yes."

And then the ex-brigand with a fierce oath ejaculated:

"Yes, indeed, I do know him; and what of all these, captain!"

"Our good friend writes us glorious news from Foo-Chow."

Toro's eyes glistened as he said:

"From Biga—"

"Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming. Yes, a grand prize is to fall into our hands shortly. He writes to let us know."

"Good—good!" exclaimed Toro, rubbing his hands gleefully, "very good, and is this all that Biga-Eng, as you call him, says?"

"Yes."

"Where is his letter?"

"Here," returned the Lascar lieutenant.

He had put it down for a moment on a big sea chest, which stood beside him, and now it was gone.

In the general interest which the conversation had excited no one had observed a hand steal along the top of the chest and withdraw the letter.

Nor had they seen the stealer creep on hands and knees from his lurking place.

All that they knew now was that the letter was gone—overboard they imagined.

So was the audacious Jack.

But they did not know that.

Luckily for him he had gone as he came—unseen.

* * * * *

"Doctor—doctor!" cried the boy, sliding down the companion ladder.

"What is it?" echoed the old American, looking up quite startled.

"See here."

And Jack handed him his booty.

"What's this?"

"A letter; this ship is the pirate's consort."

"Never!"

"It is indeed."

"And this letter—"

"Announces when their next victim will fall into their hands; but oh, doctor," added the boy with a burst of feeling, "only fancy, my father, my uncle, and several of our friends will be on board."

The doctor started.

He eyed young Jack sharply.

He feared that he was going mad, that the exciting events had deranged his intellect.

"Read the letter, sir," cried young Jack Harkaway, "and learn for yourself."

The doctor did so.

"You are right, my boy," he said, gravely; "this is sad news, indeed."

CHAPTER VIII.

MANDARIN MOLE AT HOME.

MANDARIN MOLE appeared likely to fall into trouble.

The Chinese are notoriously superstitious, and their supernatural fancies take some few peculiar flights.

Their national weakness is a belief in Feng-shuy, who may be defined as their god of luck, and has also some control over the wind.

To propitiate this deity, the Chinese perpetrate all kinds of wild extravagances.

For instance, they will only build their houses facing certain directions; and if examined closely into, it will frequently be discovered that sanitary laws are mysteriously at work in their ostensible purpose of invoking the protecting aid of Feng-shuy.

It was in this way, however, that Mandarin Mole contrived most unluckily to get into trouble.

He built up a low house, or perhaps more correctly speaking, a hut, upon the property, and whether, being on the hill side, he had in some way worked in opposition to the inexplicable and inscrutable laws of Feng-shuyism, it is not easy to say.

However the day following the completion of this building, a very remarkable accident occurred.

Mr. Mole was seated at breakfast with Dick Harvey, Chloe, Jack Harkaway and his wife and little Emily.

Mr. Mole was reading a native newspaper, or was pretending to read it, for he was a more ardent humbug than ever, and he used to get coached up in the meaning of the newspaper, and recite it off from memory, pretending all the while to decipher the Chinese characters as easily as English.

Monday burst into their presence, closely followed by his fellow darkey, Sunday.

Mr. Mole looked up.

"Oh, Brudder Mole!" ejaculated Sunday.

"What is it?"

"Oh, such an accident, brudder Mole," cried Sunday.

"An accident, Sunday? Surely—"

"Oh, dere is—"

"What?"

"You know dat new house?"

"The new house?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Brudder Mole, Brudder Mole!"

Mr. Mole began to grow impatient.

"What is it? Why can't you speak out?"

"Don't you get 'patient, brudder Mole," said Sunday.

"No, sar," said Monday; "you'll learn all 'bout it soon enough."

"What?"

"Too soon."

"I wish you would—"

"Oh, dat new house!"

"What of it?"

"Smashed up," replied Monday, with great gravity.

Mandarin Mole sprang up in his chair, and stamped his wooden leg vehemently upon the ground.

"My new house smashed up?" ejaculated Mole.

"Yes, sar."

"Yes, Brudder Mole."

"It is, sar, added Monday. "Smashed—broke up—chawed up, sar—pulverized—demolished."

"Well, exclaimed Mr. Mole, staggered by the blow, "my newly-built house demolished—I mean demolished—tut, tut, confound it, I mean demolished."

"Got your tongue in a knot?" suggested Harvey, chuckling.

"Don't joke, Harvey," said Mr. Mole, reprovingly. "It is no joking matter."

Harvey looked very serious at this.

"Right, sir, he said, "it is not. You should have taken more water with it."

"With what?"

"Your grog, sir."

Mr. Mole was utterly outraged at this.

Before the ladies, too.

Monstrous!

He mentally vowed to store up a heavy debt of vengeance against that scoundrel Dick Harvey.

It should be none the less certain or severe because he was forced to conceal his anger now.

None.

* * * * *

"Why, Brudder Mole," explained Sunday, "the fack is, dat Monday and me was walking ober dere to get to work, when we see a lot of dem fellers bolt away like scared venison."

"Deer," suggested Mandarin Mole.

"Well, deer; ain't deer and venison all the same?"

"Yes, but—"

"Don't interrupt, Brudder Mole," said Sunday, loftily.

"Well?"

"We see dem fellers flying off like flashes of greased lightning before we see nothink else, and den all of a suddink, instead of the house we see nothink but a blank space standing up."

"Lor!"

"Good gracious me!"

"Are you sure you are right?" said Mr. Mole.

"Certain."

"I can place implicit belief on them for one," said Harvey; "their keen sight is really marvellous."

"You think so, Harvey?" said Mandarin Mole.

"Decidedly. Who but they could have seen a blank space standing up?"

"Who indeed?" added Harkaway slyly.

Poor Jack!

Poor bereaved father!

It was the first word of light-heartedness that they had heard him utter since the fatal sea fight with the pirate junk.

"And the house?" asked Mr. Mole. "What has become of the house?"

"On de ground, Brudder Mole," answered Sunday. "Eh, Monday?"

"Yes, all dat's left of it," returned Monday.

"But now tell me," said Mr. Jefferson. "Just a word, Monday."

"Yes, sar."

"Who did it?"

"Dem damn niggars, sir."

"The Chinese?"

"Yes."

"What can they have done it for?"

"Perhaps," said Magog Brand, "it is something connected with their religion, or superstition."

"Mr. Mole listened thoughtfully till now.

Then he spoke:

"I think not. It was built by native workmen."

"True."

"And if they found anything about the place which don't agree with their faith—"

"Well, but it may have interfered with their notions of what was right for their Feng-Shuy fancies."

"I shouldn't be at all surprised," said Magog Brand, "for they are a very wonderful people, and there is no getting to the bottom of their fancies."

The party then, in some considerable uneasiness, were led off by the two negroes to the scene of the outrage. They were right.

The house which had been built by Isaac Mole as a store house for the plantation, was utterly demolished.

There lay the house, which had taken weeks of patient labor to construct—a heap of ruins upon the ground.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHINESE SENTRY THAT MOUNTED GUARD OVER THE RUINS.

THEY looked on agnast.

Utterly dismayed at the ruin before them.

What was to be done?

They held a general consultation.

"I think we ought to arm Sunday and Monday, and let them stand upon the watch," proposed Mr. Jefferson.

"Why?"

"They are sure to come back."

"Were they in numbers?"

"Dere was a big crowd of dem," replied Sunday.

"How many?"

"Can't say."

"How many should you say?" they asked, appealing to Monday.

"Thirty or forty," was Monday's reply, "or more."

"We must be careful," said Brand.

"There's not much danger," said Jefferson; "they soon clear off when they smell powder. It disagrees with them."

"I have seen the Chinese fight well enough at times," said Magog Brand.

"When they are a hundred to one, I suppose."

"Well, yes."

"As far as numbers go, they would have it all upon their side," said Harkaway; "so let me recommend prudence."

"Quite right, Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, "although, to tell the truth, if I were to follow my own inclination, I should act very differently."

"And what would you do?" demanded Dick.

"Why, mount guard," replied Mr. Mole, boldly.

"Alone?"

"Yes, alone!"

And he gave a regular swagger.

To see Mandarin Mole just then, one would have deemed him capable of challenging the whole province single-handed.

Dick eyed the old tutor slyly.

"Mr. Mole is quite right," said he; "and my opinion is that we ought not to stand in his way."

"True, Harvey," said Mole, "I feel I could fight fifty of them single-handed."

"Surely, Harvey, you would never consent to it."

"Not if we had to deal with any ordinary man," said Dick, "but I happen to know Mr. Mole better than most of you."

"Yes, but consider, single-handed."

"No—no, Mr. Mole must not be allowed to do anything so rash."

Mr. Mole felt that this was a safe opportunity for him to indulge in a little swagger and brag without running any risk.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am not ungrateful for your affectionate regard and consideration. But there are moments when one's dignity and one's manhood revolt at coercion. I insist."

He regretted this speech very soon.

Although they had made such a show of opposing his rash resolution, they now one and all gave way, and turned to leave him then and there upon his solitary watch.

"Where are you going?" he asked, anxiously.

"Home."

"To leave you," added Harkaway, "since such is your wish."

"Decidedly."

"Come along, then," said little Mr. Brand, falling into the joke. "But stay, one word."

"What is it?"

"Had we not better take an affectionate farewell of Mr. Mole?"

"Farewell!" gasped Mr. Mole. "What for?"

"In case of accident, Mr. Mole."

Mandarin Mole was seen to wince at the word. "Accident!" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"But you don't think—"

"We don't anticipate anything," said Dick Harvey; "but one can never tell, so, good-by, Mr. Mole, and may we meet again."

"Amen!" groaned Mr. Mole.

"And may no harm come to you—at any rate, let us pray you may not be mutilated like they do their prisoners generally."

Mr. Mole made a very wry face at this.

"Oh, do they mutilate their prisoners, Harvey?" he said.

"Oh, yes," continued Dick, cheerfully; "they are the most inventive people on the face of the earth in the matter of tortures for their prisoners."

"Dear, dear!"

He made a hard struggle to keep up an appearance of calm.

But his tears would show themselves in spite of him.

"Well, good-by, Mr. Mole," said Harvey.

"One moment, Harvey," said Mandarin Mole. "Eh—ah—just—ah!"

"We shall be within gunshot."

"Oh!"

"And though you are likely to fall honorably—"

"Don't."

"We shall avenge you, never fear."

"A pretty look-out for me," groaned Mr. Mole. "And we'll bear your mutilated remains back to Mrs. Mole, no matter what may occur."

"Don't talk nonsense, Harvey," said Mole.

"You'll find it no nonsense."

"But what do they do? I—I am anxious to learn all I can."

"Yes," said Dick to himself, "and to find an excuse to keep me here."

Then he gabbled off hurriedly some of the notorious tortures which the Celestials have discovered.

He also added a fancy sketch or two of his own.

"Well," he said, "this is a favorite programme of theirs. They strip the prisoner stark naked, and tie him hands and feet so that he is utterly helpless."

"Then they procure a springless cart, and carpet the bottom of it with jagged and rusty nails and bits of broken glass—"

"Ugh!" from Mole.

"And they lay their prisoner upon this to carry him over the worst roads they can find."

"Beasts!"

"Then they draw his finger nails—"

Mole with a groan dived his hands into his pockets.

"With a pair of pincers, and then—"

"Then," groaned Mole; "why, that would kill anyone."

"Oh, no," said Harvey, coolly, "not anyone that was hardy."

"Oh!"

"Then they tie the prisoner up by the ankles, and give him the bastinado."

"What?"

"You don't know what the bastinado is?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, it is nothing more nor less than playing the devil's tattoo upon the soles of your feet with bamboo canes, and by Jupiter, don't it make you dance?"

"The fiends!"

"Well, next—"

"Next?"

"Yes."

"Why, no man—"

"Oh, yes, he could," retorted Dick, anticipating Mr. Mole's remark, "if, as I stated before, he had been brought up hardy."

"Hardy!" echoed the dismayed Mandarin Mole; "why, hang me, Harvey, if an iron statue could stand it."

"Well, next—"

"There—there," interrupted Mr. Mole, "I don't want to know anything more about the horrors that these revolting wretches have invented."

"Oh, very well," said Dick, "then I'll go."

"Eh?—oh!—stop a minute."

"What for?"

"To keep me company."

"Well, said Dick, with an air of great candor, "I must say that that would give me great pleasure, only I have no wish to fall into the hands of the Chinese thieves."

"Nor I."

"Not that I so much mind their springless cart, their bastinado, or their nail-drawing."

"Ugh!"

"I only think of the sequel."

"The sequel!" shrieked Mandarin Mole. "What sequel can there possibly be to such horrors?"

"The prison," replied Dick, solemnly.

"Prison?"

"Yes."

"You can't compare confinement in a prison to such horrors."

"Can't I?—no, I can't; you're right, Mr. Mole," said Dick, looking more and more alarmed as he spoke; "nothing can compare to the prison. Do you know they keep you awake until you die horribly of fatigue?"

"Oh!"

"Jailers are placed over you night and day, who prod your ribs with cruel spikes every time that you close your eyes."

"What devils!"

"They are."

And then, having made poor Mandarin Mole about as uncomfortable as he could by this rather highly-colored description of the manners and customs of the Celestials, Dick Harvey made off.

"Good-by. Remember we shall be within gunshot, and if they torture or kill you, we shall avenge you."

And off Harvey ran at a great rate to rejoin the rest of the party, who were far on their way back.

When he overtook the party, they were just discussing the prudence of leaving Mr. Mole there alone.

"It's all very well for a joke," said Mr. Jefferson; "but supposing that the thieves did come down from the hills and fall upon poor old Mole—we shouldn't laugh then."

"No, indeed."

"What shall we do?"

"Fetch him away."

Dick burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"You don't know old Mole yet," he said; "there is no fear of his remaining long there alone."

"Think not?"

"It is sure."

"Still," said Jack Harkaway, "he might remain too long just by five minutes."

"Better call him back."

"No; wait awhile," said Dick, "here we are at home. I'll show you a way of frightening him back, and then he will explain to us how many Chinese he has killed. But wait here for a while."

So saying, he went in, and returned in the course of five minutes accompanied by a curious little Chinese soldier, carrying an old-fashioned musket and the cimeter-like side-arm.

He wore a helmet also, which was so put on that it almost concealed his head and face.

Harvey led his native trooper up to the assembled company, and then gave him the word of command in his own particular Chinese.

"Fy-chow!" cried Captain Dick, in those hoarse accents with which anyone is familiar who has seen an English company put through its paces by a superior officer; "Keri-ki-ko-kum, slap-bank penni-wink!"

And then turning towards the company, he added, gravely:

"Freely translated, gentlemen, that means present arms!"

The Chinese soldier faced around.

"Why, blow me!" exclaimed Mr. Nabley, in surprise, "look there! What is it?"

"It is Nero."

And so it was. Nero, as large as life!

And a capital Chinese young Jack's monkey made, with perhaps this trifling ground of objection.

His pigtail had commenced growing rather lower down his back than did the real celestials.

"Now we are off to make an experiment," said Harvey, with his old, mischievous laugh.

"Where to?" demanded Jefferson.

"To the plantation; to the ruins."

"What, to Mandarin Mole's post?"

"Yes."

"What is your trick?" said Harkaway. "Tell us all about it?"

"I am only going to march Nero up there, to see how far noble old Mole's pluck will hold out."

So the whole of the party, seeing that there was a chance of fun, followed Dick Harvey, and monkey Nero Fy-Chow.

As soon as they got within a hundred yards or so of Mr. Mole, they discovered that that worthy gentleman had been trying to raise his courage for the solitary vigil by artificial means.

He had sat upon the ground to rest while he "refreshed" from a black bottle that stood beside him.

The bottle was labelled in conspicuous characters "Spring Water," but it smelt suspiciously of whiskey.

So did he!

It was evident that he had refreshed freely and frequently, for he had been completely overcome by it, and had sunk back asleep.

Not only did the worthy Mole sleep, he also snored most discordantly.

Nothing could be better for Harvey's scheme.

He brought Nero up, made him strike an awe-inspiring attitude over the recumbent Mole, and then he, vulgarly speaking, kicked up a devil of a shindy.

First Harvey hullabalooed, and then blazed away on a six-shooter revolver.

And just as he had let off his revolver, down dived Dick behind the ruins of the house.

Mole shrieked!

It was a drunken cry, but a cry it was.

"Murder, thieves, help! Oh, the devil!"

No response to this appeal appearing to be forthcoming, Mr. Mole scrambled up to his feet—well, no, to his foot—and hurried away as fast as his legs—well, no, his leg—would carry him.

Nero managed to fire off his gun, loaded only with powder.

Mole heard the report, and tumbled flat on his face, but was soon again on his leg, stamping quickly away.

"Well, Nero," said Harvey, laughing heartily, "we've got the best of that, anyhow. Now, Nero, I'll leave you on guard, and just go home to hear what old Mole has to say for himself. He's sure to tell lies by the bushel over this."

CHAPTER X.

NERO MOUNTS GUARD UP A TREE, AND SCALPS A MARAUDER.

Nero, like a brave soldier, shouldered his musket and marched up and down.

There was a bit of a hop in his march, otherwise he would have looked like a highly-disciplined sentry.

This was until Dick Harvey was out of sight, for Nero was as artful as the father of evil himself.

Then he dropped his musket and began to search about among the ruins of the demolished pagoda.

A woefully curious monkey was Nero.

His sharp eye had perceived something glistening in the rubbish of the ruins.

He prodded down with a stick that he found, poked and raked about until he fished up the object of his search.

It was a shiny leather case, such as letters and papers are carried in by many persons.

Nero tried to open it, for his natural intelligence told him it was to be opened, but he could not manage it, and so he stuffed it into his pocket in apparent disgust.

Suddenly Nero pricked up his ears.

He heard footsteps.

He looked about him, and then seeing cause for alarm, he scrambled up into a tree.

It wanted all his wonderful dexterity in climbing to make good his hold up there with his musket on his arm.

He had only just time to get fairly ensconced when a man appeared upon the top of the steep hill just close by the ruins of Mole's pagoda.

The new comer looked carefully about him before venturing to descend the hill.

But apparently it never occurred to him to look into the tree where Nero the artful sat perched and grinning.

The new comer was satisfied that the coast was clear.

So down he came.

He paused immediately beneath Nero's perch, and looked anxiously about him.

And then he began muttering to himself.

Now his speech appeared to have a singularly exciting effect upon his monkeyship.

What could be the reason?

Was it because the stranger, who was outwardly a thorough-paced celestial, spoke in English, that had an ultra-Whitechapel ring in it?

Perhaps.

Certain it is that it did excite Nero exceedingly.

"I'm cocksure," said this strange Chinese, "that I dropped it about here."

He raked about again.

"Blow it!" exclaimed the disappointed searcher. "Hang it!—dash it!"

Nero grinned, and showed his teeth.

"Well," soliloquised the Chinese, ruefully, "this is a pretty go—jigger me if it ain't."

Here I come, with a whole mob of these long-tailed pigs, to knock down old Moley-poley's shop, to find the treasure he's got there, and devil a ha'porth can we drop on.

"All the good I do is to lose my case, with my

letters and money in it. Damme, it's like the boy that found a marble and broke a window with it."

He stopped short.

His eye fell upon the black bottle that Mandarin Mole had been caressing.

"What's this? Spring water," said the stranger.

He picked it up.

He sniffed.

Then his eyes beamed, and his voice sounded ecstatic as he murmured:

"Whiskey!"

He took a suck.

"Oh, num-num!" he exclaimed; "and Irish, too. Old Mole was a rum old fool, but he had always a very pretty taste in whiskey!"

And so he showed his belief in Isaac Mole's taste, by sucking away at the whiskey until he began to feel the potency of it about his head.

"I wonder if old Mole has been here," he said to himself, presently; "I should like to drop across him alone; I'd make him soapy, and nick his wooden member. What a lark! Ha! he! he!"

And the way he laughed told its own tale plainly.

Mole's whiskey was much overproof.

"I'd like to transmogrify him altogether," pursued this amiable person, who was amusing himself with picturing the discomfiture of the real provider of the feast; "I'd like, as the Cockney proverb says—or don't say—to catch a mole asleep and shave his eyebrows! What sport!"

Suddenly his humor changed.

He went at once from gay to grave.

"What if they have got my case of letters—and the money? Oh, blow the tin!" he added. "But the letters! Oh, my! that would be too cruel! How it would spoil everything, just as we have got such a delicious swindle on!"

"Oh, it can't be!"

He had got to his feet, but to his surprise he found that he was not quite as steady as he could have wished.

"Dear me! I must have got cramped sitting so long," he muttered.

Suddenly Nero swung around and dropped from his perch.

Down he plumped, full in front of Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming—for that was the mysterious Celestial who spoke English of the Whitechapel idiom.

The latter gave a mighty start.

Nero recovered arms like a real military machine.

"What is it?" cried Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming. "Oh, sir, don't fire!"

Nero remained impassive.

Immovable as a statue.

He was a wonderful animal, and did rare credit to Dick in having learned so much in so little time.

"Chin-chin!" said the half inebriated Biga-Eng, ruefully. "I wish I only knew a little more of their blessed lingo, I might be able to gammon him, and smarm him over."

Nero advanced upon the terror-stricken Biga-Eng menacingly.

"Don't, handsome sir. Oh great mandarin, don't hurt a poor little fellow."

And just then he caught sight of Nero's face.

This was enough for Biga-Eng.

His white face grew ghastly, his teeth chattered, and his knees knocked together.

"Evins!" groaned the wretched man; "it's the old one been and disguised hisself and coming to fetch me for my sins—where's his fork?"

Nero showed his teeth.

And truth to tell, he did look rather an alarming personage, when his white teeth stood out against his hairy face.

He was an artful monkey, too, and he saw his advantage.

He made another step forward.

Then down Biga prostrated himself in the dust.

Thereupon Nero brought down the butt-end of his gun an awful whack upon Biga-Eng's bigger end.

"Who!" yelled Biga; "somebody come and help me. Oh, the devil—the devil!"

And he had good cause to yell.

The effects of the blow were to color the unfortunate man's damaged part like a harlequin's coat, and it effectually prevented him from enjoying himself sitting for a long while to come.

Nero belabored the unhappy man until he was tired of the sport, and then he made a grab at his hair. It came away in his paw.

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming wore a wig.

At this, satisfied with his victory, Nero shouldered his musket and marched off homewards.

You could see by his strut that he was not a little pleased with his exploit.

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming wailed and groaned—he groaned and wailed.

And when he could no longer repress his curiosity, he looked up.

There was the conquering hero marching off with his gun in one hand, and the spoils of victory in the other.

"Oh, my, what a remarkably long pigtail he wears!" said the suffering man, to himself.

"And how low down—but I've done him and I could laugh if he hadn't given me 'bacca so awful, for I've diddled the devil himself—he thought he had scalped me, and blowed if it ain't a wig!"

And so he crawled away with his hands behind him, groaning and yelling:

"Oh, how I suffer in this particular part!"

CHAPTER XI.

BIGAMINI DROPS HIS MASK AND MOLE DROPS IN-TO HIM.

HARKAWAY and Jefferson met Mole on his return from the ruined pagoda.

"Glad to see you alive, sir," said Harkaway; "did anyone attack you?"

Mr. Mole nodded.

"Yes."

"Surely you were not exposed to any danger, sir?" said Harkaway.

"Indeed I was," replied Mr. Mole. "But thanks to my good nerve and strong arm, I have given them a lesson."

"Goodness gracious!" said Mr. Jefferson. "Did many attack you?"

"Yes."

"In force?"

"They were at least twenty," said Mr. Mole.

"Did many attack you at once?"

"Yes. I will not disguise from you that I was in some alarm. But the cowardly ruffians dare not come within reach after I had knocked three of them upon the head."

Harkaway and Jefferson said nothing. Their looks expressed their profound admiration for Mandarin Mole.

"They all assailed me at once," pursued the unblushing Mole, with the air of a warrior. "But I fell upon them—hang it, sir, I smote 'em hip and thigh, and I scattered them like chaff before the wind."

"It sounds like a song," said Harkaway.

"It does," said Jefferson. "I should have been sorry to have been in your place, Mr. Mole."

And while Mr. Mole was giving a finishing touch to his highly-colored narrative, Dick Harvey came in.

"Here's a letter for you, Mr. Mole," said he.

Mr. Mole took it and read it.

And then he handed it to Mr. Jefferson, saying that it was from the shipbroker, relating to the departure of the *Franz Josef*.

Mr. Jefferson read it and handed it to Harkaway, who scanned it through, and then read it aloud to the company generally.

"HONORED SIR:—The *Franz Josef* sails on the twenty-third inst. by special arrangement, and special accommodation has been prepared on board for your friends, who purpose going. The state cabins and berths have been re-fitted, and every requirement has been carefully anticipated.

"Your excellency's obedient servant to command,
BIGA-ENG-MING-MING."

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "are you still of the same mind?"

"Yes."

"All?"

And so it went around, everyone deciding upon leaving the place, save Isaac Mole and his Chloe.

It was poor Harkaway who had started this movement.

Since the untimely fate of young Jack, his mother was so saddened that nothing could arouse her from her settled melancholy.

Constant change of scene was, he thought, the only thing to chase dull thought.

And so it was determined that they should start for the voyage in the first ship—by the *Franz Josef*.

At the same time it was understood that they were only going for the voyage.

They agreed with old Mole to return within a few months.

The only members of the party that were to remain behind were Daniel Pike and his comrade, Nabley, the French cook, Hypolite Potiron, and Mr. and Mrs. Mole.

* * * * *

"By-the-way," said Dick Harvey, "I have got a bit of fun to relate to you."

"What of?"

"Mr. Mole."

"Me!" cried Mole.

"Yes—you and Nero."

"Nero and I went up to the ruins of the pagoda."

Mole started.

"Nero and you!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, what of that?"

"Nothing, only I didn't know," stammered Mole.

"I rigged Nero up as a Chinese soldier—"

"What?"

"And he looked the part to the life," continued Dick, as though he did not hear the interruption. "Well, there lay Mr. Mole asleep and snoring."

"No—no!"

"Snoring."

"No—no—no!" cried Mr. Mole, vehemently. "Asleep, I grant you, but I deny the snoring. Mrs. Mole will tell you that I never snore. Chloe, my love, tell them that I never snore. Tell the truth."

"Why, you snore like a old pig, Ikey," said Mrs. Mole. "I sometime punch you in de back, turn you ober, and den you not snore so much."

Whereupon there was a general roar of laughter.

"Well," resumed Dick.

"Don't trouble yourself to tell any more, Harvey," said the tutor; "we have had quite enough."

"Come—come, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, "I want them all to know about it and you too. Well, Nero and I marched up. Mr. Mole was snoring, as I said, and beside him lay a bottle."

"Spring water," ejaculated Mole.

"Marked so, but smelling uncommonly like whiskey."

"A scandal!"

"Oh, Mr. Mole—Mr. Mole," said Harvey.

"So it is," persisted Mr. Mole. "Besides," he added, appealing to the company, "if there was any truth in your wild story, where is Nero dressed up, eh? That's a poser for you, Master Harvey—eh, where's Nero?"

Dick heard a noise that induced him to step to the entrance.

"Where's Nero?" he echoed; "why, here."

And Nero, grinning and showing his teeth, marched triumphantly in, shouldering his musket, and bearing the spoils of victory.

"Halloo!" cried Harkaway; "he's found something."

"What's that?"

"It looks like Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming's hair," said Magog Brand. "I always thought that he wore a wig. Well, Mr. Mole, what do you say now?"

"Why, where is Mr. Mole?"

He had disappeared.

The overpowering evidence had even been too much for him.

So he retired until the affair blew over.

* * * * *

The twenty-third arrived.

The *Franz Josef* had been fitted up grandly enough for royalty to travel in, and the Harkaway party embarked.

Nero was left behind, be it observed.

Since his adventure at the ruins of Mole's pagoda, Nero had been allowed to retain his native soldier's costume.

The consequence was that the leather case containing the letters and money of Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming was not discovered.

On the morning of the twenty-fifth, Mr. Mole came upon Nero squatting on the ground, and making another desperate attempt to open the leather case.

"What have you there, Nero?" demanded the tutor.

The intelligent monkey held up his treasure to Mr. Mole, and, to his great delight, the latter opened it immediately.

"Why, what's this?" exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"Money—bank-notes—English, too. Why, Nero, where did you get this?"

He went on.

There were letters, so Mole opened one of them, eagerly glancing first at the outside address, which was:

"Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming,
Hong Kong."

"To be forwarded."

But inside the letter, the first words dazed poor Isaac Mole, and set him all of a tremble.

"FRIEND BIGAMINI:—Your last letter has

come safely to hand. But before I go on to speak of the chief subject of interest to us all, let me remind you that you have been guilty of imprudence in selecting a name so nearly like the one by which you were so long known, and by which I always feel to want to address you. You are surrounded by danger. You do not know how careful you should be when you have in your immediate neighborhood such a mob of keen-sighted men as Harkaway—curse him—Harvey, Jefferson, a new foe; and his friend, the dwarf, Magog Brand, not to speak of the two English detectives, Pike and Nabley, who can read a face as plainly as a written volume! Beware of them! Your only bit of luck is having that drunken old donkey, Mole, there. "What!" ejaculated Mole, firing up, "that drunken old donkey, Mole, there." You have only to hang him out a drink, as a bait, and you can hook him when you please!"

He dashed down the letter with a cry of indignation.

"The villain!" he ejaculated; "but let me finish it."

He resumed:

"If you can manage to get the Harkaways off, as you suppose, by the *Franz Josef* on the twenty-third, it will indeed be glorious, for nothing can then save them from visiting our delightful floating country, the *Flowery Land*—and in that case good-by to all our old enemies at one fell sweep, and we shall reap the reward of industry, the fruits of our labors. We shall be rich for life, my Bigamini. Harkaway's brat is here on board, and has been permitted to live till now. In two days he is to be hanged!"

"Poor boy—poor boy," cried Mole.

The letter fell from his hand, and Nero eagerly snatched it up.

"Ah! Nero—Nero," said poor old Mole, "if you could only read you would learn there that you are going to lose the best master you ever had, or ever could have, and I shall lose the best boy, my own dear young Jack."

And the old tutor, quite overcome by his feelings, fairly wept.

We can't say if monkeys ever indulge in tears, but one thing is certain.

Nero knew that poor old Mole was in grief, for he sidled up to him and fondled him just as a pet dog does when you are in trouble.

"Poor Nero," said Mr. Mole; "poor Nero, when did you get this? Why didn't you find it sooner? Nero, you are just two days too late."

Alack, he was.

The *Franz Josef* was two days on her journey.

Two days nearer its fate.

Mr. Mole jumped up.

What was to be done?

"It's no use sitting down to regret," said he aloud; "I must do what I can to save them. Oh, what an ass I have been to fall into such a trap. What shall I do to help them?"

He looked out for the two detectives.

They were both out.

He scarcely expected them back that night.

Was there no one he could consult in the meantime?

No one.

"Oh, I shall die of impatience," groaned Mole, in anguish, "I know I shall. All, all gone—all at one fell swoop, and I shall be left a poor miserable old wretch to end my days in solitude."

His grief was sincere, but still it was rather hard upon the faithful Chloe.

* * * * *

"Sir!" said a servant, advancing to Mole.

"What now?"

"The broker, Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming, would see your excellency."

Mr. Mole started up.

"Biga-Eng?"

"Yes, sir."

"Show him in."

The servant bowed and left the apartment.

"Now," said Mr. Mole, to himself, "now I shall have him. Now we will see how he will go on with that 'drunken old Mole,' as they call me. Well, I am a drunken old fool, and a donkey, but please goodness he shall learn that Isaac Mole is not utterly despicable when he has a lucid interval."

He hastily concealed the pocket-book, gave a final glance at the letter to ascertain who was the writer, and discovering that it was Toro, he got Nero out of the way while the sham shipbroker Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming was ushered into the room. The traitor bowed.

Mole responded by a grave salute.

He had to exercise the greatest control over himself to prevent his feelings betraying him.

"Good health and happiness to your excellency," said the sham shipbroker. "You are looking in excellent health."

"I am, my friend," replied Mr. Mole. "Come and be seated."

Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming obeyed with a smile.

"To what am I indebted for the pleasure of this visit?" asked Mr. Mole.

"I have brought your excellency a little present," said his visitor, blandly.

"Ah, what?"

"A bottle."

"Of spirits," interrupted Mr. Mole, excitedly.

"I thought so."

Biga-Eng smiled.

"Your excellency is fond of whiskey?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Mole, with forced gaiety, "very. Some of my dear friends go so far as to say I'm a drunken old rascal."

"Surely no one would take so great a liberty. Have you enemies, your excellency?"

"Some few only."

"Your excellency surprises me."

"Why, when I was in Italy, I knew a scoundrel, an Italian thief, called Toro—you look strange. Do you know the name?"

"No, your excellency," replied the visitor, quickly. "Not I."

"I thought you might."

"Never was in Italy in all my life."

"Never?"

"Never."

"Could you swear that?"

"Yes."

"At the point of death?"

"Oh, certainly," replied the visitor cheerfully, "certainly."

"That's right," said Isaac Mole, stumping across the room to a cabinet in which he kept some arms, "for you are near death now."

"What, sir?"

The visitor smiled.

He had not quite caught what Mr. Mole said.

Mr. Mole got from his cabinet a large horse pistol, an ugly, old-fashioned weapon, with a barrel eighteen inches long, and walking around Biga-Eng's chair, he took the unsuspecting visitor by the throat, and thrust the pistol muzzle into his face.

"Now, Bigamini," said Isaac Mole, in a strangely calm voice, "you are at the point of death, so swear you never were in Italy in the whole course of your life."

It was, indeed, the villanous and hypocritical imposter Bigamini, the murderer, and the former associate of Italian brigands; who, after being cast adrift upon the ocean, was saved by a passing vessel, and now is a spy in the employ of Chinese pirates.

The villain was unmasked.

His color went, and his cheeks turned of the livid hue of the grave.

His jaw dropped and he was dumb-stricken.

"Swear!" said Isaac Mole, in the same cold and terrifying tones; "swear it, for I have promised myself that you shall die with a lie upon your lips."

Not a word.

Not a sound from that fear-stricken wretch.

"Do you hear?" said Mole, with subdued ferocity. "Swear!"

And he jabbed the pistol fairly into the imposter's mouth.

Bigamini only gave a hollow groan.

"Swear!" persisted Isaac Mole.

Bigamini then found his tongue.

"Concealment is useless," he said; "but if you kill me, your friends will all be sacrificed."

"Swear!" cried Mole, jabbing him again with the pistol.

"Spare me and I can save them all."

"You prince of liars," said Isaac Mole, "you are trying it on again."

"I am not; my life is in your hands; is it likely I would trifle with you now?"

"How could you save them?"

"Easily."

"Explain," cried Mole, quickly, "or the pistol might go off, and your head with it."

"Let a steamer be dispatched after them," said Bigamini, hurriedly; "let me be kept in bondage until they are safe. If you can pay for it—"

"If," cried Mole, excitedly, "if—I'll pay thousands—anything, everything that I possess."

"Nothing is easier then," said Bigamini.

"What shall I do? I will give my life to save my friends."

"Call your people."

Mole stepped up to a gong that stood in the room, and beat upon it with a large drumstick that was hung beside it.

Bigamini glanced eagerly about him.

"Now or never!" the spy muttered to himself.

He bounded from his seat, and snatching up a broad cimeter from the cabinet of arms, he made a dash at Mole.

"Ha!" cried Mole.

But before he could get out of reach, a deadly cut from the cimeter upon his leg sent him to the ground with a groan of agony.

"You've got it, old Mole, have you?" said Bigamini.

He raised his cimeter again to strike.

Just then something leaped upon his shoulders, and two sharp, claw-like hands caught in his hair.

The hands of something horrible and unnatural ate into his flesh, and he was blinded with his own blood.

He yelled with agony.

Down he rolled upon the floor, and then, catching a glimpse of his hitherto unseen enemy, he was filled with a nameless horror.

His assailant was the devilish-looking sentry from the ruins of the pagoda.

He scrambled up and fought desperately, and made for the door, but some one was near at hand.

So he fought up to the window, and somehow or other contrived to scramble out.

But his unearthly assailant had given him something to remember him by for many a long day to come; for the brave Nero had not only taken out the traitor's hair by the handful, and this time it was not a wig, but he had also torn his face, and blinded him in one eye for life.

* * * * *

Daniel Pike burst into the room, followed closely by Nabley.

"Mr. Mole—Mr. Mole," cried the latter, "what is it?"

Poor old Mole was almost beyond speech.

But he pulled himself up, and with a groan gasped:

"Bigamini—window—he escapes—shoot—kill—bring him back."

Pike heard the words, and his quick wit caught the meaning at once.

So, snatching up his rifle, he ran to the window.

"I can see a man flying up the hill."

"After him!" cried Nabley; "don't miss him."

"I won't."

Pike scrambled through the window, rifle in hand.

Then when he saw that the fugitive had to make a long, straight run of it in the open, he dropped upon one knee, and resting his elbow upon the other, he took a long, steady aim.

"Hit him!"

He had.

The fugitive threw up his arms and fell forward upon his face.

"He's safe," said Daniel Pike, contentedly; "now for poor old Mole."

He ran back to the window and put his head in.

The place was full of people now.

Poor Chloe was supporting her husband's head in her lap, while the servants were gathered about, looking on.

"Nabley," said Pike, anxiously, "How is he?"

"Bad."

"Is there danger?" he asked, anxiously.

"I can't say; but the villain has nearly lopped off the other leg—if we save him, he will have to go through the world upon another wooden leg."

Just then poor Isaac Mole opened his eyes.

"Has Pike got him?" he faltered.

"Yes."

"That's brave," said the sufferer. "Save them, and I can die happy. Bring him here."

Pike and one of the servants ran back and mounted the hill to the spot where his well-aimed shot had dropped the pirates' spy.

But he was gone.

Where it was impossible to say.

But Bigamini had got clear off, and the only sign of his passage was a tell-tale pool of blood upon the hillside where he fell.

This was indeed bad luck, and Daniel Pike returned quite crestfallen to the house.

CHAPTER XII.

HUNSTON'S MECHANICAL ARM—"FOES, BEWARE ME!"—THE LEGEND OF THE PIRATE TREASURE.

LET us board the *Flowery Land* once more. Several details have to be related in connection with the pirate vessel, before we resume the adventures of the unfortunate Isaac Mole.

They had naturally a good deal of leisure time upon their hands now, and some of them put theirs to a very good advantage.

Robert Emmerson showed that, in addition to the various gifts of which we have seen he was possessed, that he was a highly skilful mechanic, and he passed his hours in making a movable arm for Hunston.

The artificial limb was made of steel, and so cunningly wrought, there was not even any stiffness to betray it to those who might not happen to know of Hunston's loss.

The hand was a masterpiece, and joined with a delicacy and finish that was perfectly marvelous.

When this clever piece of mechanism was complete, Emmerson showed that, joined to his skill in other branches of mechanical art, he was an admirable engraver.

Upon the smooth steel of the thicker part of the arm he engraved this legend:

"From Emmerson to Hunston.

"FOES, BEWARE ME!

"But woe to the wearer if raised against a friend."

Now, clever as was this mechanical limb, it yet concealed from the general eye a most important feature of its construction.

This feature was known only to Emmerson.

It was this.

One of the springs in the top joint was anointed with a subtle and insidious poison.

It was so arranged that in a given time the friction would inevitably cause the joint to wear away, and then it would need the care of the inventor himself.

He alone knew how to repair it in that part.

The bond of guilt existing between them gave Emmerson no guarantee of Hunston's good faith.

Now this would, he thought, make Hunston secure; for once let the spring wear through, it must corrode, and then woe be to the wearer of the arm!

During the progress of the work, Robert Emmerson had carefully kept the nature of it a secret.

The consequence was that when Hunston appeared on deck amongst his comrades, there was a general excitement.

They all pronounced it a marvelous work, and Emmerson was quite lionised for awhile.

"You see the legend it bears upon the arm, my friends and comrades all," said Hunston. "Let us hope that it is true. Let me echo the wish heartily, sincerely, 'Woe to the wearer if raised against a friend!'"

As they walked aft, Hunston asked Toro what was the day of the month.

"The twenty-third."

"Good!"

"You know what occurs to-day," said Hunston.

"No," replied Emmerson. "What?"

"The *Franz Josef* sails to-day."

"Of course," said Emmerson, his eyes flashing greedily, "I had forgotten for the moment."

"In a few days more we shall have them in our clutches."

"I hope so."

"It is sure."

"Remember the old adage," said Emmerson, smiling. "There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip."

Hunston laughed.

"I don't think there's much chance of mischief now."

"I hope not."

"I am sure not."

"Can you make sure of your agent, Big—what's his name?"

"Bigamini."

"Ah, Bigamini; is he to be relied upon?"

"Yes; he's the prince of spies."

"Glad to hear it," returned Emmerson, "for if all goes well, this should be a splendid haul."

"Splendid!" echoed Hunston; "my dear Emmerson, it will make us rich for life!"

Emmerson smiled in a strange manner.

"Do you doubt it?"

"Not I."

"Why do you laugh, then?"

"Partly at your enthusiasm and partly at

"At what?"

"At my fancies."

His manner was slightly tinged with melancholy, and it excited Hunston's curiosity.

"What fancies?"

Emmerson looked very solemn as he answered: "I think that I shall not have long to enjoy whatever spoil we may make."

"Staff!"

Emmerson smiled, though sadly.

"You laugh at such fancies, Hunston," he said.

"I do."

"I don't wonder at it. Still I cannot shake it off. I am sure that I am not long-lived."

"Ah, you mustn't trouble yourself about that," said Hunston, heartily. "Robert Emmerson is worth forty dead men yet."

"At present, yes," said Emmerson.

And so the conversation was allowed to drop.

* * * * *

It was midnight.

All was silent on board the *Flowery Land*.

In the old doctor's cabin a solemn conference was going on between young Jack, Harry Girdwood and the doctor.

They were debating still about the best means of warning their friends against the threatening danger into which they had been decoyed by the treachery of the pirates' spy, Bigamini.

And this was the only scheme they could hit upon.

They got a dozen large bottles together, and in each they dropped a few small shot.

This was to be used as a steadier.

Then they inserted a small written note in each bottle, and carefully corked and sealed it.

They next waxed each bottle and dipped it in tar.

This done, they drew a broad line of white, and another of red around the top of the bottle.

And when the first of these was completed, young Jack dropped it through the cabin window into the sea.

Then followed an anxious time for them all.

Would it float?

Would it attract the attention of a passing vessel?

Alas! it was doubtful.

"We must hope for the best," said the American doctor; "it is our only chance, and I have a presentiment that all our labor and all our perseverance cannot go unrewarded."

And so the good old gentleman comforted his two young companions.

The second night saw three more of their signal bottles completed and launched.

Now, as it chanced to be fine and moonlight they could plainly see their bottles dancing on the water.

"They are visible enough," said young Jack.

"Our only hope is, therefore, to send out enough of them and hope for the best," said Harry Girdwood.

"True," said the American doctor; "our hope must be in Heaven now."

And so nightly they pursued their self-set task, hoping that Providence would send the *Franz Josef* across their little floating beacon of warning.

"Doctor," said young Jack, one night, "do you remember how you saved me?"

"When?"

"When they followed me down here and would have carried me up on deck."

"Yes."

"Was there any truth in that?"

"In what?"

"That little phial, that, if crushed, would send the whole ship and crew to the bottom?"

"Yes, undoubtedly, it is true."

"Then," said young Jack, thoughtfully, "we have always that one resource on hand."

The American doctor looked serious.

"We have; but still I should hesitate to use it."

"Even in a very extreme case?" asked young Jack.

"Yes."

"Then you just give it to me, doctor," said young Jack, boldly. "I shouldn't myself."

The doctor looked more serious than before.

"I dare say not, Jack," he said, quietly, "but it is better in my hands at present."

* * * * *

Harry Girdwood was convalescent.

Still he was scarcely fit as yet for violent exercise.

By the good doctor's orders he reclined for several hours out of the twenty-four more than either he himself or young Jack did.

He shared all their counsels, and being compelled to rest so long bodily inactive, his mind was all the more pliant and industrious.

And one solitary thought ever occupied it.

Escape!

At a first glance you will naturally say that there was not much scope for invention, unless he started by some plan which was too full of risk and danger to be contemplated for an instant.

"Doctor," said Harry Girdwood, late one night, as they were about to commence their usual conference, "and you, Jack, I have got something to say to you both, something to propose."

"What is it?" said the doctor.

"I have a plan of escape to suggest."

"Is it practicable?"

"You shall hear and judge for yourself."

"Go on," Harry, said young Jack, who was all eagerness to hear it.

"In the first place, do you hear that creaking noise just overhead?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what it is?"

"It's the boat swinging there, and it creaks with rust as the ship moves, or as the wind blows."

"That's it, Jack," said Harry Girdwood, "and it was that noise that first gave me the idea as I lay groaning with pain. At first it was only a confused fancy, but by degrees I have got it into shape, and I think now that if you will help me, we can work it all pretty safely."

"Go on," said young Jack, with all the hot eagerness of youth.

"Proceed," said the old American more gravely.

"I thought night and day how to lower that boat and ourselves with it. We must get a store of food together saved out of our rations, to victual the boat, and we must get fire arms. The next thing is to have the pulleys so well greased in advance, that it will drop down into the water without any noise at all."

The doctor smiled.

"That's a difficult job," he said.

"Difficult," said Jack, with eagerness, "but not impossible."

"Perhaps!"

"And what about the watch?" asked the doctor.

"You must do that."

"How?"

"Why, you must have plenty of drugs that could send them to sleep for any length of time."

"I have," responded the doctor; "the only difficulty would be to—"

"To administer them," said young Jack.

"Yes."

"That shall be my job," said Harry; "the plan of the French cook was a good one—all that it wanted was care in its execution."

"True."

"To avoid rashness."

"True again."

"Well, I would get in the night at the water cask—tamper with it all."

"My dear boy," said the doctor, "that is a bold scheme—a very daring notion."

"It is, doctor; nothing but daring can save us. Would you not dare something to get out of this floating slaughter house?"

"I would, indeed," said the doctor, with a sigh.

"Then join us in our scheme," said young Jack; "I'm sure it sounds well, and with your help, it could be done, I am sure."

The doctor made no reply.

He sat moodily for a long while, calculating the chances of this desperate business.

"Well, doctor?"

"Well, my dear boys, I shall join you," he said, "but only on one condition."

"Name it."

"That you will be guided by me and avoid rashness."

"I promise."

"And I too."

"Then, my boys, I am in the plan heart and soul, and if you only join the greatest caution to your natural tact and skill, something good will be sure to come of it."

Well, the conspirators passed each night in maturing Harry Girdwood's plan of escape.

But upon the third day a misfortune happened to them.

One of the crew, a Lascar, named Spirillo, fell from the rigging to the deck, bruising himself rather seriously.

The man was carried by his comrades into the cabin, and the doctor had to attend upon him.

The injuries the man had received were of such a nature that they feared to move him.

The consequences were that Spirillo was obliged to spend two days and nights with them, which put an end effectually to their proceedings in the matter of the escape.

Now the doctor was by nature humane, and he was also exceedingly polite.

"It's an unfortunate job, Jack," said he to our young hero, "but we must make the best of it. We have a double motive in getting this Spirillo well as quickly as possible."

"Let me nurse him then," said young Jack.

"You can if you like," said the good doctor, "only be careful."

"Trust me, sir."

"And attentive."

"I will."

And so young Jack found himself head attendant upon Spirillo, the Lascar pirate.

The Lascar received young Jack's attentions somewhat surlily at first, but the boy's winning manner soon told upon the rough Spirillo, and by degrees he quite warmed up to him.

Then it was that young Jack suddenly discovered that Spirillo was anything but a brutal or ferocious man at the bottom, indeed, that he had under the very roughest of exteriors, some really kind feelings and worthy attributes.

Young Jack made Spirillo grow quite confidential in the course of a day or so.

And by degrees he learned all the Lascar's past history.

It was not without a certain interest.

But we have not space here to give it in his own words.

Briefly, then, Spirillo had fallen into his present way of life by pure accident.

Without being utterly bad, he was just careless enough of his reputation and morals, generally, to drift into anything that turned up—whether smuggling, piracy, or even slave-catching.

He had originally been in the merchant service, and his vessel had been run down by a notorious pirate—one of a whole fleet—cruising about the Greek Archipelago.

Here he had spent many years of his life.

The Greek rover had spared his life on condition of his joining them.

Spirillo might have chosen the career had he had the choice left free to him.

With such an ugly alternative as losing his life, he did not hesitate half a second.

And so, behold Spirillo drop suddenly from being a bluff, honest tar, into a full-blown pirate; one of a most notorious gang, with a heavy price upon his head, and a rope halter waiting ready for him whenever he should be captured.

"And how came you to leave the Greeks?" asked young Jack.

"I had a quarrel with the captain," replied Spirillo; "it was about one of the prisoners taken. I knew that he was a vicious fellow; he never forgave anyone yet for so much as a thoughtless word—never forgot an injury, however slight or unintentional. So I made my escape."

"Where?"

"Here."

"What, direct?"

"Almost."

"But did you know of these people when you lived cruising about in those latitudes?"

The Lascar pirate stared in a peculiar way at the questioner.

"You mustn't be too curious," he said.

"I don't mean to be indiscreet," said young Jack, hastily; "pray don't let me annoy you by my questions."

"You don't," responded Spirillo, quite melted by the eagerness of young Jack to make himself agreeable. "Ask all you wish; there is only that that I shall refuse to tell you—nothing more. Anything about the old gang I'm free to speak about—anything—it's only of these that I must, of course, keep silent."

"Then just one question, please," said young Jack; "could those Greeks make large fortunes out of their plunder?"

"Some of them."

"How, some?"

"The captain and some of the officers."

"I see."

"There is a treasure in the pirates' island of the Archipelago that would make the fortune combined of Rothschild, Oppenheim, Baring, Pereire, and a score more."

Jack smiled.

"It's a big one, then, Spirillo," he said.

"You are right, young fellow, it is. You have read the tales of the 'Thousand and One Nights,' I suppose?"

"Yes."

"And you remember the tale of 'Ali Baba'?"

"I do, indeed," said young Jack; "you would speak of the Forty Thieves' treasure?"

"Yes."

"Well, and is there such a fairy-like cove in your pirate island?"

"You may laugh, young fellow, but it is literally so. The wildest fancy cannot exaggerate the fabulous wealth of the treasure."

"Whose treasure is it now?" said Jack.

"One man's."

"One!"

"Yes, one—the captain's. This, the wealth of a kingdom, has been amassed by him in one generation. Daring, courage, and some skill, too, have made him, beyond all manner of doubt, the richest man upon the face of the earth!"

Jack stared.

The picture that Spirillo drew took his breath away.

There is something awe-inspiring in hearing of such fortunes.

"And what does this captain do now?" asked he; "does he still cruise about to plunder poor wretches who haven't a tithe of the riches which he himself possesses?"

Spirillo shook his head as he replied:

"Monastos is a great man now."

"Where?"

"Athens."

"What!" exclaimed young Jack, "has he ventured to trust himself there?"

"In Greece, they are not particular. The government winks at many things, especially the origin of a man who can lend it a million at a day's notice."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed young Jack.

"Why, Captain Monastos is a power in the land," Spirillo went on to say. "A man of more importance than prime minister—ay, or even king. He is *feted*, and courted, and fawned upon more than any other man in Athens."

"And all this upon—"

"Plunder; don't pause—that's the word, but I'd dearly like to get at it."

"At what?"

"His treasure."

"Do you know where it is?"

"Yes; and I suppose that I am about the only living man who does."

"Indeed?"

"Besides himself. The secret was shared by few, and of this few I was one. The others who were in the secret with me died off one by one by sickness, in such a mysterious manner that I deemed it prudent to get out of the way in time."

"Why not go and secure it, Spirillo?" said young Jack. "Why stay here working for nothing with men you care nothing for, and in a black, bad trade, when by helping yourself to Captain Monastos' treasure, you will only be helping yourself to your own?"

Spirillo's eyes flashed as young Jack spoke, and he remained buried in thought for some little time.

"Shall I tell you the truth, young fellow?" he said presently.

"Yes."

"Well, the truth is this: I have thought of it, I do think of it. Not a day of my life but I think of it. But to get it involves many difficulties."

"What are they?"

"I couldn't do it alone."

"Well?"

"I should have to trust my secret with others. I should want capital and a ship; and a daring, bold fellow with me."

"And if you find all these, Spirillo?"

"Why, then, I'd think seriously about it."

"What would you say if I could show you how to get all—money, men, a ship?"

"You?"

"Yes."

"Who are the people?"

"My father and his old friend Dick have all that is required for such an expedition."

"How should we get them?"

"I must escape from here first," said young Jack, looking Spirillo straight in the eyes.

"Escape?" cried the Lascar, leaping up from his couch and grasping Jack fiercely by the wrist.

CHAPTER XIII.

YOUNG JACK'S NEW FRIEND—THE PLOT THICKENS—CAUGHT.

JACK quietly released himself from the Lascar's grasp, and repeated the words:

"We may escape."

"Humph! I will think of it when I am better. But not a word to anyone."

In a few days Spirillo was cured.

He returned to the deck and his duties generally.

He came down as often as his duty would permit to see the doctor, and young Jack never failed to profit by these visits.

He had seen with a shrewdness far beyond his years, the effect of his words upon Spirillo.

Spirillo would ask young Jack every time that the subject was broached, if he was sure of his father, and if he could guarantee that his father would enter into so wild a scheme as the expedition after the pirates' treasure in the Greek Archipelago.

"I'm sure of him as I am of myself," replied young Jack. "Spirillo, you don't know my father—God bless him! Why, his gratitude to

anybody who had shown me any kindness would guarantee his consent."

"Perhaps," said Spirillo, dubiously.

"He would want the tale to be borne out by something in proof, that's all."

"That can be easily done."

"How?"

"Here is the plan of the place. You may take charge of it, young fellow."

So saying he handed over a roll of paper to young Jack.

"Can I trust you, Spirillo?" he said.

"Spirillo frowned.

"Have I not trusted you?" he said, pointing to the roll of paper.

"Of course. Forgive my words; only caution must be used. We are surrounded here by danger."

"True."

"I can tell you how we could escape."

"The deuce you can. How?"

"You see that boat that swings there, creaking in the rusty davits over your cabin?"

"Yes."

"If a reason could be found for lowering that boat, and let her be towed along astern, I could do the rest?"

Spirillo's eyes brightened at these words.

"Is that all?"

"All."

* * * * *

That night the boat was being towed along astern.

Young Jack ran down gleefully to carry the news to the doctor and Harry Girdwood.

The doctor was elated at this.

"Jack, my son," said he, "I believe now that we shall carry it through."

"Believe," cried young Jack; "it is a certainty."

"We must get the boat under the window here to-night," said Harry Girdwood, "and lower our provisions and arms into it."

"We can manage that."

"And then we have but to lower ourselves."

"And Spirillo," said the doctor.

"Of course. It would indeed be base ingratitude to play him false," said young Jack.

"How did Spirillo manage it?" asked Harry Girdwood.

"Under pretext of greasing the chains and davits," was the reply.

"The only thing remaining, is to get Spirillo to learn our latitude very precisely, and get a chart, so that we may be able to steer to the nearest port when once we get clear, and not drift about hopelessly in mid ocean."

"We can manage that," said young Jack.

A little after sundown, young Jack went up on deck, in hopes of coming across his friend and accomplice, Spirillo.

The latter was on the look-out for him.

At a single glance, young Jack perceived that there was something amiss, for Spirillo's look showed uneasiness.

He made a sign to young Jack not to speak with him yet, until they were sure that they were not observed.

Then, having assured himself upon this point, he beckoned the boy aside.

"Jack," said the Lascar, in low, earnest tones, "I want to say a word to you that is very serious."

Jack stared.

"Serious?"

"Yes."

"Indeed?"

"Your life is in danger, a very great danger."

"How?"

"You have some bad enemies on board."

Young Jack smiled.

"That is no news," he said; "and I know to whom you allude."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Then you know that there is a great danger?"

"I do; the greatest, but I have baffled them before now in as great difficulties as this, and I have the greatest confidence yet."

Spirillo stared at young Jack, and smiled dubiously, as he said:

"You are a brave boy of England, and I hope your confidence in yourself may not be misplaced this time. The danger is great. Toro and his friend, your fellow countryman, hate you worse than poison, and you will have to die."

"I do not fear them."

"They mean it this time."

"They have often meant it," said young Jack, "but they couldn't manage it. Besides, now I know that the captain of the *Flowery Land* means me to live."

"He does."

"What have I to fear then, if the captain means it?"

"Everything. They dare not oppose the captain, especially as his purpose for keeping you alive is but to get a heavy ransom from your parents for you."

"Of course."

"Well, your two enemies mean you to die; they are opposed by all the crew as well as the captain. Therefore, they have been conspiring to put an end to you on the quiet, so be on your guard, lad."

"I will."

"They mean to get hold of you, and heave you overboard in the night, while the captain and crew are all asleep."

Jack shivered.

"That's awkward," he said; "and when do they mean to carry out this amiable plot?"

"To-night, if they can."

"Very good; I must be on my guard. But how did you learn it?"

"By overhearing their schemes. They did not disguise their thoughts before me. They conversed very freely in English, never dreaming that I spoke your language."

"Good!"

"You have but to keep out of their way to-night. In the morning I will put the captain on his guard, and then woe betide them if they dare lift a hand against you."

Young Jack shook the pirate's hand warmly.

"You are a real friend, Spirillo," he said, earnestly, "and I hope to show my gratitude to you in some tangible form soon."

"Help me to get the treasure, my lad, and I shall have all the reward that I want."

"That you may count upon."

"Right; and now back to your cabin. Away with you. Good-night!"

"Good-night!"

The boy turned from his new-found friend, and made for the cabin stairs.

Just as he was upon the top step, a hand was placed upon his shoulder.

A cloth was thrown over his head, and he was lifted up in a pair of brawny arms and borne away.

In the toils!

The boy gasped.

The full sense of his danger flashed across him.

His hand had been resting upon his knife when he was caught up, and this proved of very material assistance to him in the dire extremity.

He jerked his arm free and lunged out with his knife at random.

He struck something, and the knife went in pretty deeply.

So deeply that his captor gave a cry of pain, and then, as young Jack wriggled with desperation, he dropped upon the deck.

To scramble up and make off was the work of a moment.

Two men rushed after him.

First was Hunston.

Next was Toro.

The latter, as he came on, was busily engaged in binding up his right arm, which the boy's knife had gone right through.

Young Jack flew on like the wind, dodged around a heap of luggage piled up on the deck, and glided down the cabin stairs.

They were closed upon him in an instant.

"I'm safe now," thought young Jack; "they will never dare follow me here."

But barely had the thought flashed through his mind when he made an alarming discovery.

A discovery which chilled his very blood.

In the confusion of his flight he had not got into the right cabin.

In a berth at the further end of the cabin was a man stretched at full length upon his back, and tossing about restlessly.

The face and form were alike familiar.

A step nearer, and young Jack recognized in the man the notorious Robert Emmerson.

Robert Emmerson—the murderer!

Poor Jack felt he was lost.

Here was his retreat cut off.

Emmerson here, his two bitterest enemies up the cabin stairs.

Perhaps had passed the stairs, and did not know he was there.

Quick as thought, he crept up the steps.

But before he could put his head out of the hatchway, he heard Hunston's voice close by his ear:

"He is not far off!"

Jack drew back.

Down he went again on tip-toe, and just as he got to the bottom, they were on top peering down.

"He must have gone down there."

"Stop a bit," said Hunston. "You stay on

guard here, Toro, while I get around. The brat is as slippery as an eel. We mustn't leave him half a chance."

The boy's heart sank.

He had but one faint hope.

This was that they would go further to resume their search, and that he could make a bolt for his own cabin.

The boy crept nearer yet to Emmerson's berth.

It was got up with a certain amount of elaboration and luxury for a cabin of a pirate ship, and the bed was hung with damask curtains, which now served young Jack as a hiding place.

Now, as he stood here, his attention was gradually fixed by the disturbed appearance of the sleeping Emmerson.

The murderer's dreams were evidently not of a pleasant nature.

No wonder.

Man may occasionally elude the vigilance of the law for the crimes of which Emmerson was guilty, but there is a worse punishment than the hand of man can inflict which he cannot escape. The workings of a guilty conscience.

Robert Emmerson did not know what rest was.

Never a night passed in quiet rest.

Barely did he close his eyes ere the shadows of Nabley the elder, and of Saul Garcia, the Jew miser, haunted his dreams.

Ghostly and forbidding they looked, and the words they whispered in his ears were always upon the same strain—warnings, dire forebodings!

Just at the moment that young Jack came down, he was with his last victim, the wretched, murdered old Jew.

Saul Garcia, robed as Emmerson had last seen him—his pallid face whiter than his night clothes—with the blood fresh from his many wounds, and bedabbling his long, thin, grey hair!

The shade of his victim did not speak to him, but it placed its long, thin fingers upon his arm and they closed upon it!

Then while the miserable man was shrinking from the shade of Saul Garcia, he felt himself dragged from his bed through miles and miles of the ocean, emerging in a bright and sunny land.

In his dream the shade of Saul Garcia dragged him on across waving cornfields until they came upon an English village.

It was a pretty, bright scene; there was the village green away to the left, the old-fashioned Norman church close to it with its quaintly-built parsonage adjoining, and just a field off was a more modern brick building with a miniature belfry over it.

The bell was just tolling the boys out of school.

One of these young scholars caught Emmerson's attention at once.

He was a fair-haired boy, with blue eyes and a clear complexion.

A handsome, well-built boy, with an expression that was frank and manly.

There was something in that boy of all the others which greatly interested Emmerson.

It was himself in his boyhood.

And he followed the boy's path homewards.

His way lay across a large tract of green meadow land, beyond which he came to a lane cut between two hills.

As the fair-haired scholar passed through this ravine, a low whistle was heard that caused him to look up.

Then a man pushed his way through the bushes, and catching hold of an overhanging branch of a tree, he swung himself, with considerable agility, down into the lane right before the schoolboy.

The boy was a bit startled at first, but he soon recovered himself.

And then there took place between them an earnest conversation.

It was clear that the swarthy, gipsy-looking man was tempting the boy—that the boy was resisting the temptation.

The gipsy now brought out a big, old-fashioned silver watch as a bribe for the young boy.

And the latter wavered.

Then Emmerson grew strangely excited as he watched the result.

Excited, too, in the eager hope that the boy would not yield.

Strange this!

Strange, for so utter a villain as Robert Emmerson to be now so troubled in his dream.

His dream still continued, and he saw that the boy's good nature conquered, and he went on his way.

And then Emmerson could not repress a cry of joy.

The gipsy fellow ran after the fair-haired boy, and caught him by the collar.

He took out an ugly-looking knife, and flourished it before the little fellow's eyes.

But the boy, too plucky for the gipsy, ducked under his legs and bolted off, while the gipsy toppled over, and scrambled upon the ground.

Emmerson, in his dream, gave a joyous laugh. And then the scene had faded away. All was darkness.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FATE OF ROBERT EMMERSON—YOUNG JACK AT BAY.

EMMERSON, in his dreams once more looked around him.

The shade of Saul Garcia was still before him. The long, bony fingers still clutched his arm.

The Jew spake not, but, waving his hand once more, silently invited Emmerson's attention again.

The scene was changed.

Before him now was a homely, pleasant interior, and there were two actors in this scene, both of whom caused every pulse in Emmerson's body to vibrate with strong emotions.

And why?

Because the most prominent figure of the two was the woman who had cared for him from his tenderest infancy—who had nurtured him with a fond affection that none but a mother could show.

Yes! it was the shadow of his mother.

The other figure was the fair-haired, blue-eyed boy who had just fled from the gipsy tempter.

And that bright little lad was—himself.

Emmerson gazed, awe-stricken, at these figures—so real, so life-like, which his conductor conjured up in dreamland.

And now Emmerson could see that the two were conversing, but he could not catch their words.

But their gestures were full of meaning.

He was describing to his mother the danger from which he had just escaped.

The mother showed her fears as he went on, and then she was full of gratitude for his safe delivery from peril.

He undressed himself, and prepared for bed, and then, before going to rest for the night, he knelt devoutly at his mother's knees, and they lifted their voices together in prayer.

The fair boy's bright face and his innocent eyes looked up to her, and she looked fondly down upon him.

It was an eloquent picture of filial affection and parental tenderness.

He thought he heard a stern voice speak.

"Do you recognise the group?"

Emmerson started, rudely aroused from contemplation of this touching picture, and there was the shade of Saul Garcia pointing solemnly to the scene.

Emmerson felt sensations which had been strangers to his breast for many and many a long year.

"Speak," said the shade of the Jew; "answer me."

"Alas!" responded Emmerson, "I do."

And with his answer came a deep-drawn sigh, telling of remorse that was more agony than any physical suffering could possibly be.

"You remember it?" said the shade of Saul Garcia, in the same sepulchral tones. "Now look again."

Emmerson involuntarily obeyed.

The scene was changed.

The actors were the same as before.

The bright-looking boy was in bed; his mother stood on the threshold—lamp in hand.

She bade her boy a fond and lingering good night, and then withdrew, leaving the boy to his slumbers.

He was asleep almost immediately.

Then after a brief interval a light shone faintly in at the window.

A moment or so after, the window was forced noiselessly open, and a dark, swarthy face appeared.

It was the gipsy.

The ruffian who had met the boy in the lane, and tempting him in vain, threatened his life.

Emmerson, in his spell-bound dream, watched in breathless expectation for the next incident in this dark scene.

The gipsy darkened the lantern awhile; then clambered into the room.

But as he walked, his footfalls were not heard; they made not the slightest noise.

He moved like a shadow.

His feet were provided with the soft list overshoes such as burglars are reputed to wear in their nefarious calling.

The intruder listened at the door.

Then he made himself secure against interruption by fastening the door on the inside.

This done, he stole back to the bed, and flashed the bull's-eye lantern in the sleeper's face until the glare aroused him.

As the boy opened his eyes, he was dazzled with the fierce blaze, and he failed to recognize the intruder until the gipsy spoke.

"Bob, you must come with me!"

The boy refused.

He was full of fears; but he stoutly refused to go with the gipsy.

Thereupon the latter seized him by the throat, and brandished the knife in his face; and it seemed as if murder was imminent.

Emmerson could look no more thus passively.

He made a rush to help the boy, but suddenly the shade of Saul Garcia seemed invested with a giant's strength, and he dragged him back with the greatest ease.

Emmerson fought desperately, but he fought in vain.

And in the middle of this horrible nightmare his struggles aroused him, and he awoke.

* * * * *

"Where am I?" he murmured confusedly.

"What, a dream only? But, oh, how dreadful!"

He stretched out his hand for the light.

He raised it.

Something was beside him.

It was a boy kneeling at his bed.

It was young Jack.

The boy's fair face was turned upwards appealingly, and as Emmerson looked, the face so reminded him of the one he had just seen in his vision that he could scarce believe that he was awake.

"Will this never be over?" he muttered, passing his hand across his eyes; "shall I never wake?"

"Save me!" cried young Jack. "Save me!"

Emmerson stared half stupefied at him.

"Why, I know you—you are young Harkaway."

"Yes."

"How came you here? What do you want?"

The voices of Toro and Hunston were heard just then at the top of the steps.

"He must have gone down there."

"Never. It is Emmerson's berth; the boy's as sharp as a needle. He knows that as well as you do. He'd never venture down there."

"I don't care where he has ventured," said Toro. "Once let me put my hand upon him—"

Young Jack looked up imploringly at Emmerson.

"You will not let them harm me?" he urged.

"You were young once yourself, and you'll let me hide here, I know."

Young Jack's stammering appeal touched Robert Emmerson in his present state of mind, more than words far more eloquent could have done.

How could he forget the dream of his own youth, when he had only just seen himself back in his boyhood as plainly and as vividly as he now saw young Jack?

It all flashed through his mind in those few moments.

He was back in the past and tracing his career from whence he had looked upon those two scenes of his boyhood until now.

Step by step he traced his fall and his progress in guilt up to this.

And all this panorama of a life flashed before his eyes in the space of a minute, and then he was recalled to himself by hearing footsteps on the companion ladder.

"Save me!" cried young Jack, despairingly.

He clambered up on Emmerson's bed, crawled over him, and crouched down behind him for protection.

He could not know what was passing in the guilty Emmerson's mind.

He could not see the workings of that over-charged conscience.

What, then, could have induced him to seek refuge there?

Instinct.

"You're safe here, my boy," said Emmerson, placing his hand kindly on Jack's head.

Hunston appeared on the steps.

He paused and turned to his companion.

"Keep a sharp look-out up there, Toro," said he; "don't let him slip."

"Trust me," replied the ex-brigand. "If he slips through my fingers, I'll forgive him."

Hunston advanced, and then young Jack began to tremble with apprehension.

He would have crouched down behind Emmerson, but the latter would not allow this.

"Stand up," he said; "there's no fear while you are with me."

Hunston heard the voice and ran down.

Just as he reached the foot of the ladder, he called out to Toro to follow him.

"Come on," he shouted; "I have him, Toro."

Toro replied with a chuckle, and ran down after his companion in crime.

"You young viper!" exclaimed Hunston, "let me crush you."

And he advanced a pace to drag young Jack out.

"Stand off," said Emmerson, springing up; "the boy is under my protection, and you must not harm him."

"Must not?" echoed Hunston, fiercely. "What does this mean?"

"Must not!" repeated Emmerson, with a kind of dogged determination.

"Oh!" cried Hunston, scornfully; "we will soon see this. Here, Toro!"

"Here," returned Toro, entering just then.

"Hark you, my friends," said Emmerson; "I want this boy spared."

"You, Emmerson, want him spared—what for?"

"Why," said Toro, "he belongs to the crew that are our worst enemies. Harkaway and his set have ruined us, and shall we spare him now?"

"Yes."

"No, a thousand times no!" cried Toro.

"It's only to please me," persisted Emmerson, "and surely you cannot refuse me so small a matter as this boy's life. Besides, consider, the captain and crew wish him spared for the rich ransom they can get."

"Stuff!" cried Toro; "give us up the boy."

They looked threatening, but Emmerson was not to be daunted.

He had often shown courage in a bad cause, he was not to be cowed now that he was acting in a good one.

"I advise you both to keep back," cried Emmerson, "for I now tell you, rather than have this brave lad hurt, I would have both your lives."

"Your life then against ours," cried Hunston, fiercely.

As they advanced, Emmerson made one step back, and turning around, he made a grab at a pair of loaded pistols that hung over his bed, but before he could reach them, Hunston was upon him.

In his iron hand was fastened a long, ugly knife, and lifting this high above him, he brought it down with fearful force upon the stooping Emmerson.

The blow needed no repetition.

"Coward!" cried Emmerson, looking fixedly at Hunston, then he gave a dull, hollow groan, and rolled over.

Hunston started back aghast.

Toro was considerably startled at the deed.

Young Jack was ready to help himself by this time.

He had noticed Emmerson's efforts to get at the pistols, and he caught them up in a moment.

"Stand off," he cried, presenting these; "here's one for each of you."

Emmerson was in a bad way by now.

He supported himself upon one arm, and tried vainly to rise.

"You have done for me, Hunston," he said faintly; "and with that arm, too."

"What did you interfere for?" growled Hunston, in a surly tone. "You asked for it, and you got it. Let me look at your hurt?"

"Keep back," replied Emmerson; "it is past your aid now."

Hunston would have helped him, but Emmerson shrank from him.

Young Jack saw the repugnance that he manifested, and he menaced the two ruffians with the pistols.

The positions were reversed now.

Emmerson had to be protected, and young Jack was the protector.

"Hunston—villain!" gasped the wounded man, "I haven't now five minutes' life in me. Without me your iron arm is useless—worse than useless. Remember my words, and the legend on the arm."

And then, as though the effort to pronounce these words had been too much for him, he dropped back, faint and exhausted.

A change came over his face.

An ominous change.

The end was not far off, now.

"I would have seen you safely through this, my boy," he gasped, faintly, "but you must see to yourself, now; I am done for. Hunston," he added.

"Yes?"

"Beware the steel arm! It has been my death, and may be yours."

And then, with these words upon his lips, he sank back.

Robert Emmerson was dead, killed by his false friend, the villain Hunston.

At first the two ruffians were startled at the suddenness of the catastrophe, but they were too much accustomed to look upon death to be very much upset by this murder.

They sprang forward to grab at young Jack, but the boy was not to be taken unawares.

He sent out his pistols again, and brought the ruffians to a stand.

CHAPTER XV.

DESPERATE DEEDS—ADrift—HOW THE AMERICAN DOCTOR COVERED THE RETREAT OF THE REAR GUARD.

"Go," said Jack, boldly, "or I'll bring the pair of you down. I never miss."

They did not like the look of the boy, now.

"If you don't go, I shall lose patience," he said; "I shall bring down one, for sure, and the other will be dealt with by your Chinese friends for murdering a comrade."

At this, Hunston backed up the ladder, closely followed by Toro.

Young Jack went up after them, and driving the two ruffians before him, in this way he made for his own cabin.

The good old doctor and Harry Girdwood hastened to meet him.

"Oh, Jack—Jack," exclaimed Harry, "where have you been?"

"We have been in a rare state of mind," said the doctor. "What has kept you?"

"More than there is time to explain, doctor," answered young Jack. "I have been attacked. One of them defended me against Toro and Hunston, and one has been murdered."

"Which one? Surely not Spirillo?"

"No; where is Spirillo? Have you seen him within the last half hour?"

"No. Why?"

"We must make our escape to-night."

"Why?"

"To-morrow may be too late."

The doctor was quite flushed at this.

"Pray explain yourself, Jack," he said. "Why must it be to-night?"

"The murder of Robert Emmerson by Hunston will probably bring about an investigation of the whole matter, and any moment might discover all our plans, our boat ready for starting, provisioned and armed, and then our lives wouldn't be worth a rap."

He then gave them a hurried account of all that he had gone through upon that eventful night.

Young Jack was right.

To-night or never.

The American doctor got together his medicines and everything which had been left as his portion of the preparations.

Not a thing was forgotten by him.

Very few words were exchanged between them.

They had made a lowering apparatus by which they filled the boat with the various articles they had got ready for the expedition, and as this was dropped through the window with its small cargo, the doctor ticked off its contents against his written list of necessities, carefully compiled.

The moment approached when all would be completed.

"Jack."

"Sir."

"Spirillo."

"Good."

He moved towards the companion ladder.

"No rashness, and above all, don't venture on to the deck, only signal Spirillo and come back."

"Good."

"Harry."

"Sir."

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Now then, take the rifles. Where is the small keg of powder?"

"Here?"

"And the bullet mould?"

"Already in the boat."

"Good. Now, then."

At this moment a low, soft whistle from above told him that Spirillo was there.

Harry Girdwood answered it.

Then he squeezed through the porthole and slipped into the boat.

In the space of a minute he was joined by young Jack, who reached the boat in the same fashion.

Next came Spirillo, who glided as nimbly as only a monkey or a sailor can.

"Now, doctor," said Harry Girdwood, "make haste."

"All right."

The doctor gave a look around as he spoke, and then he stepped over the ship's side and took hold of the rope.

"Good-by to the pirate ship *Flowery Land*, farewell to the floating shambles," muttered the American.

"Not yet."

A dark form had risen from the planks, it seemed, and confronted the doctor at this moment.

The doctor was momentarily taken aback.

Only momentarily.

"What do you want?" he demanded coolly.

"You," was the reply. "You first, and them next."

"Oh! is that all?"

The man in response placed a metal whistle in his mouth.

But he did not blow.

Before he could get out a note the old American gave him a sudden drive, which sent him staggering back, and then whipping from his waistcoat pocket a tiny vial, he dashed it upon the deck, close by the man, and slid down the rope into the boat.

They were ready.

Before the doctor could be seated, Spirillo had severed the rope with one vigorous cut.

The *Flowery Land* held on her course, while the boat drifted astern.

"Lower your oars," said Spirillo, eagerly "and pull for your lives."

"There's no hurry," said the American, coolly.

"What?"

"They have got plenty to occupy them at present," said the doctor in explanation.

He was right.

"Look!"

They stared in utter amazement then in the direction of the *Flowery Land*.

The whole end of the junk from whence they had made their escape was full of a dense white vapor, which utterly obscured every object on board.

"What is that?" demanded Jack breathlessly.

"Only my way of covering the retreat of the rear guard," was the American's quiet rejoinder.

"Will it blow up?"

"No."

"But will it set the ship on fire?"

"No."

"What does it do, then?" demanded Spirillo.

"Blind the pirates for a time only."

"Then," said Harry Girdwood, "let us pull off as fast as we can—for when the smoke clears away—"

"We shall be out of range and out of sight too."

And he gave quiet a chuckle as he spoke.

They watched the huge hull of the pirate junk as it receded from sight, and by degrees nothing was visible but the dense cloud of white vapor, which seemed to rise slowly to the heavens without losing its density.

"Will it destroy them?" demanded young Jack in an awe-stricken whisper.

"No."

"What will be the effects of it?"

"Nothing very dreadful. They will doze off quietly, if they get a sniff of it, that's all."

"Stified?"

"No; merely drugged."

"But when they wake up—"

"We shall be far out of harm's way, please goodness—and now," added the doctor, "lend me the lantern, Spirillo, and let me examine the chart, for, although we are well provisioned, I'd rather not make a mistake."

* * * * *

Morning dawned.

The *Flowery Land* had utterly disappeared.

They swept the horizon with their glasses, but not a sign, not a trace of the pirate junk could be seen.

And when this was known, Spirillo eyed the doctor suspiciously.

"I rather think, doctor," said he, "that you have disposed of them all."

"How?"

"Sent them to the bottom."

Young Jack and Harry Girdwood were silent.

But their looks showed that they shared Spirillo's belief.

"No, my friends," said the doctor. "They are safe enough for all that I have done to them."

"And now, gentlemen all," he went on, airily, "now for our first picnic afloat; to breakfast."

"To breakfast!" shouted the boys together.

And a hearty meal they made of it, for they ate as free men.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON BOARD THE "FRANZ JOSEF"—THE TWO EMILYS—WHAT LITTLE EMILY DISCOVERED ON THE LOOK-OUT.

THE *Franz Josef* made good headway, and with favoring winds, scudded along in a way which slightly upset the plans of the traitor spy, Biga Eng-Ming-Ming, otherwise Bigamini.

On board the *Franz Josef* were Jack Harkaway, Emily, Harvey and his wife, and the friends Jefferson and Magog Brand.

A goodly party.

Now Emily's health had been fast failing her during the last days of their residence on Mandarin Mole's property, and they all feared more than they cared to acknowledge to each other upon her behalf.

Judge then of the great pleasure, when, after being forty-eight hours at sea, they perceived a marked improvement in her.

Her cheeks grew ruddy, and her eye regained its brightness, and her restoration to health was well-nigh complete.

The change appeared to be wrought by magic.

"How wonderfully the sea suits you, dear," said Hilda, repeatedly. "You look better and handsomer than ever now. Your dear cheeks are like damask, and your eyes—"

Emily interrupted her laughingly.

"If you were a man, Jack would be jealous," she cried. "You are so full of flattery, Hilda dear."

"I speak literal truth," protested Hilda. "I don't know how far a flatterer would go."

"Nor I, if that is not flattery."

"The sea is your proper element, depend on it."

Emily looked very hard into her face.

"Shall I tell you a secret, dear?"

"If you think I can keep one."

"Well, I should be sorry to pledge my faith to that," returned Mrs. Harkaway, with a smile of mischief, "but I'll risk it. Do you know what is the chief cause of my improved health?"

"The sea air."

"No."

"The change."

"Guess again."

"I'm at a loss."

"Then I'll tell you. It is that hope is born again."

"Hope?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you know, dear, what made me so ill? Do you know what crushed my spirit, my health, and almost broke my poor heart?"

Hilda knew well enough, but she sought to shirk the painful topic.

"You know well enough; you are a mother, and no one knows the cause so well as you. It was the loss of my dear boy, my darling Jack."

"Emily!"

"You know it," said Mrs. Harkaway; "none know it better than you, Hilda. I felt that my boy was in danger of immediate death. At one time I felt sure that all was over, and then melancholy settled upon me. I could not shake it off. I know that it would have ended by shaking me off instead," she added, with a faint smile.

"Then, dear, the inference is, from your fresh looks—"

Emily nodded and laughed gleefully.

"You guess it, I can see," she said, with an air of conviction. "My Jack lives. My boy is saved."

The exalted manner, the visibly subdued excitement that seemed to foreshadow hysterics, frightened Hilda.

She began to fear that Emily's mind was going.

Hilda sat silent before her loved friend and companion for awhile.

Emily regarded her with a singular expression on her countenance before she spoke.

"You are worrying and puzzling your brains about me, dear," she said, presently. "You cannot understand whether I am sane or wandering."

"Emily!"

"Well, I must say—"

"Of course, that's frank of you. Well, you will have to enjoy a good laugh at me."

"Then the subject will have to be a merry one."

"It will," said Emily; "know then that I have been warned in a dream."

"A dream?"

"Yes."

A look of disappointment showed upon Hilda's countenance.

The confident manner of her friend had almost made her hopeful.

"I dreamt that he was saved, that he had been in deadly peril, but that it was past, and that we should soon have him with us again. You don't believe in dreams?"

"I confess—"

"No need to—I know you don't, nor I either ordinarily, but this was an exceptional affair altogether. My dream was rather a vision, and I am sure was Heaven-sent. It was shared, too, by the two persons who love Jack best in the world."

"Who are they?"

"I should say—perhaps his father and mother."

"No, by the two Emilys."

"What, my Emily?"

"Yes."

"She never told me."

"No, but she did me. Here was the place for the confidence she had to give and she knew it. She dreamt that she saw Jack in great peril, and that at the most critical moment one of his worst enemies had his heart touched by a good spirit, and became his defender."

"She saw Jack in a boat, gliding with outstretched arms towards us. Beside him sat Harry Girdwood, and with them were two new-found friends. They were safe; she brought me her confidence, and when we compared notes, I found that our dreams had been identical in every particular and detail."

"It is a most remarkable coincidence."

"It is something more than that, dear; it is a warning—a Heaven-sent vision, I feel assured, and it will take much to destroy that conviction."

"Where is Emily?"

"I left her with her inseparable companion—the telescope."

"Where?"

"Perched up beside the captain."

"On the watch?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Harkaway laughed heartily at this.

"The minx! we have a wager on between us."

"About what?"

"Who shall discover him first. She means what Jack would call to steal a march on me. Let us go to her, and you shall see for yourself."

They went up on deck.

Here they were just in time to share in a great general excitement.

The excitement prevailing was occasioned by the lowering of a boat to fish up something floating at a distance, which little Emily had spied while on the look-out.

Jack Harkaway was in the boat, for he seized upon the least pretext for a change, and moreover, he was glad to gratify the girl's whim.

And as they rowed towards the white object bobbing up and down in the distance, the whole of the ship's crew and passengers mustered on deck to speculate upon the nature of the floating object.

"It's a gull she has seen skimming the water," said Magog Brand.

"Likely enough," returned Jefferson, "but it's no particular harm, if it be nothing more interesting even."

* * * * *

The boat pulled nearer and nearer yet.

And now they were up with it.

One of the sailors bent over the boat's side and grabbed at it, and as he pulled it in, there was a general exclamation of disappointment.

"It's only a floating bottle, after all!"

CHAPTER XVII.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEEP—THE WARNING.

AND so it was only a floating bottle, after all.

A bottle, corked most carefully, and hermetically sealed.

Tarred, and painted white atop, with a red streak around it, and with a white collar around the neck of the bottle, which had evidently been placed there to attract the attention of any chance passer.

"What can it be?" said the coxswain of the boat.

"It's a rum un, whatever it is," said another.

"A bottle of grog," suggested one of the men.

Whereupon the rest smacked their lips in eager anticipation.

"It's a queer way of bottling grog," said a tar.

"Supposing a fellow prigged it, and wanted to hide it somewhere away," suggested one.

"A blessed odd place to hide it," interrupted another of the men. "Let's see what's inside."

The men laughed and agreed to this, and they were about to knock the neck of the bottle off, when Harkaway took the bottle unceremoniously away from them.

"I'll take care of this," he said, "and we'll see what's inside it when we get back on deck."

They looked black at this.

But Jack Harkaway was one of that sort that men who know what discipline means do not feel inclined to quarrel with.

So back they rowed.

The whole company on board the *Franz Josef* were waiting to meet them, and foremost among the number were the two Emilys and Mrs. Harvey.

"What is it—what is it?" asked a score of eager voices.

"Only a bottle."

"Oh!" groaned the disappointed excitement seekers.

Once fairly on deck, the company gathered around Jack Harkaway.

When the neck was knocked off, it was found that there was no liquor in it.

"And yet I can hear something rumbling about in it," said Magog Brand.

"I'll wager I guess what it is," said Jefferson.

"I'll wager you champagne all around you don't guess," said Harvey.

"Done."

"I'll bet that I guess it," said Harkaway, suddenly struck by a thought.

Wagers became the order of the hour.

Anything for a little excitement.

While their sporting proclivities were being indulged in by the gentlemen, little Emily was seen busily engaged in writing on a leaf of her pocketbook which she proceeded to tear out.

"What is that, Em?" demanded her father.

"My guess, papa," replied his daughter, blushing a little.

"What?"

"Why, Emily, you are never going to bet!" said Jack Harkaway, pretending to look inexpressibly shocked.

"How unladylike!" said Harvey.

"Dreadful!" said Jack Harkaway.

"No—no, uncle; I only want to guess, like all of you. Here's my guess—only, mind, it is not to be opened until the bottle has been broken."

The bottle was broken, and a folded paper was discovered inside.

But the noise they had heard had been caused by some small shot which had evidently been placed in the bottle as a ballast.

"A message from the sea."

"The last words of some poor shipwrecked people," suggested Magog Brand.

"Likely enough."

Little Emily stretched forward eagerly, and to the surprise of all snatched up the paper.

Then, before they could discern her intention, she read it hurriedly through, and fell fainting on the deck.

"Look to her!" cried Harkaway, excitedly.

He picked up the paper, and while little Emily was carried away by her father, he read it aloud to the amazed bystanders.

"This is to warn the *Franz Josef* that the notorious Chinese pirate junk, the *Flowery Land*, is cruising about in these waters with the avowed object of capturing it. Their plans are all well laid, and they have precise information about the *Franz Josef*, sent them by the agent and spy of the pirates, who is called Biga-Eng-Ming-Ming. Mr. Harkaway and friends of his are known to be on board the *Franz Josef*, so that the pirates look forward to the certainty of making a very rich prize. The warning is sent forth by Jack Harkaway the younger and Harry Girdwood, both prisoners on board the *Flowery Land*, but who fondly hope that their captivity draws to a close. Anybody finding this is earnestly requested to forward it to Mr. Harkaway, who will handsomely reward the finder."

Harkaway and his friend Harvey were silent. An awe-stricken silence had fallen upon them all.

* * * * *

"Well, Hilda," said Mrs. Harkaway, "what have you to say to my vision?"

"Say—nothing," responded Hilda; "I am all amazement. Give me the note that my Emily wrote."

Harkaway had forgotten this for the moment.

He now opened it, and read there little Emily's guess at what the bottle would be found to contain.

It was simply these words—

"A message from Jack."

"Wonder upon wonder," ejaculated Harkaway, handing it to Hilda.

The latter actually trembled when she read the words. It looked like witchcraft.

"I shall look upon you as a sorceress in future, dear," she said, "and my Emily too."

"Pon my life!" exclaimed Jefferson, "that's tall guessing? Why, she was the only one who shot the mark."

"The only one."

"Gentlemen," said Harkaway, seriously, as he looked about him, "there is something more in this than mere guessing. The hand of Providence is clearly indicated here. Let us profit by the warning without delay."

"At once."

"At once!" echoed every voice about him.

"Let us have the captain here, too, and have a general conference."

"This was done."

The captain came up, and the matter was gone into at length.

"Let us take opinions as we go on," said Harvey.

"By all means," said Jefferson, "and suppose we begin with the captain."

"Good."

"Now, sir."

The captain looked about him rather nervously before giving his answer.

"I think, gentlemen," he said, "that you will guess my answer. There cannot be two opinions I presume, on the matter. We must put back without losing any time."

"But what about the writer of this letter?" exclaimed Jack Harkaway; "what about my boy, eh? Shall we go back without making an effort in behalf of the brave lads that warn us of our peril?"

"What good could we do in opposing such a vessel as the *Flowery Land*?" said the captain.

"We could at least try," said Harkaway.

"Yes," said the captain, "and swell the list of their victims, that's all, and perhaps cause your boy to be murdered under our very eyes; no, Mr. Harkaway, that would be idle folly. The only thing is to get back and seek the assistance of the British admiral. Then we shall be able to rescue the lads, and pay out these villainous sharks into the bargain. We shall be doing a wonderful service to the world at large by these means."

Harkaway made no immediate answer, but he looked as if he did not relish the idea of going back.

"Well, gentlemen," said the captain, "what do you all say?"

"I, for one, think you are right," said Jefferson.

"There can be no doubt of it," added the dwarf; "a moment's reflection will suffice to convince you of that."

"I must say I think so, too," said Harvey; "much as I am tempted, Jack, to say as you have said, I can't help seeing it would be the height of folly to do it. We must get a ship that can cope with the pirates."

"Perhaps you are right. I have only one stipulation to make."

"Name it."

"That you get back with all dispatch, lose not a day, not an hour—nay, not a minute. My boy's life may actually depend upon an hour one way or the other."

They little thought what had already taken place, how Mandarin Mole had detected the villainous little spy Bigamini.

Still less did they anticipate that poor Isaac Mole had lost his other leg, and that for the future, he would have to stump through the world on a pair of timber toes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RAFT AND ITS DEAD—AN EVIL OMEN.

YOUNG Jack's troubles were not over.

The pirate junk was out of sight.

Their provisions held out; but they had one severe difficulty to encounter.

Bad weather.

They were driven before the wind at a desperate rate for hours.

But they lived it down.

On the third day they came in sight of a sail.

This raised their hopes.

They hung out flags, and made every possible signal of distress.

But in vain.

They had the mortification of seeing the ship keep on her course without heeding them.

This can be easily understood.

The tiny craft was invisible to the big ship, which they saw with comparative distinctness.

Had the people on the passing ship been on the look-out for them, a close scrutiny through a tel-

escope might have revealed their mere speck of a boat, dancing about the waves.

But they were not.

And so they passed on, never dreaming that four fellow creatures were so near, comparatively, and in imminent peril.

"We shall never be seen," said young Jack, despondingly, "unless we are near enough to get run down."

The doctor was more philosophic, however.

He had one word of consolation for every grievance.

"Wait."

"That's all very well," said young Jack, impatiently, "but it is more easy to preach patience than exercise it. Our only chance is to be picked up by a passing vessel."

"True."

"We may go weeks again and not meet another."

"True again."

"Then can you wonder at my impatience?"

The doctor smiled.

"My dear boy," said he, "when you get my age, you will take matters more quietly."

Another day passed.

Towards sundown they fell in with an adventure. Spirillo was engaged in setting a sail that he had contrived, when he spied something floating out to leeward.

"What is it?"

"It looks like a piece of a wreck."

"Anybody on it?"

"No. Yet stay—I think I see someone—give me the glass."

He looked long and earnestly.

"I think I can see a man making signals."

"Look."

"There, in that direction."

After a few moments, young Jack distinguished something very clearly.

"I am positive that I see a man on the raft," said he, "but he appears to be bowing to us."

"Or to someone else," added Spirillo.

"Let us pull towards it," cried Jack.

This was done.

The day was declining, and in the fading light it had appeared farther off than it was in reality, for in less than twenty minutes they were close enough to see what it was.

And a ghastly spectacle it proved to be.

A roughly-made raft, to which was lashed two half-naked forms.

One was fastened to the side of the raft, and his lashings had slipped with the motion of the waves, and his dead body, attached only by a leg, while the rest of the body was submerged, was towed along.

The other form was that of a tall, gaunt man, with sunken cheeks, hollow eyes, and a long, grizzled beard, who sat huddled up in the center of the raft, bowing gravely to something in front of him.

They shouted to him as they approached, but he did not hear them, apparently, for he went on bowing with the same gravity.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted Spirillo.

"Hailoo—ho!" responded the man on the raft, in sepulchral tones, "bring the lights, and pipe all hands for a dance!"

They looked at each other gravely.

"An Englishman," said young Jack.

"Or an American," added the doctor.

"Mad?"

The doctor nodded.

"What shall we do?"

"Give him something to eat."

Harry Girdwood tossed him a piece of biscuit, and so true was his aim, that it fell at the man's feet.

He started, snatched it up, and devoured it eagerly.

And then, before he had swallowed the last morsel of it, he fell heavily forward on his face.

They pulled alongside, and the American doctor boarded the raft.

He knelt down beside the man, and found him utterly insensible.

"The shock has been too much for him in his weak state," he said.

He turned the man over and felt his body vainly for a pulse.

Then he looked up at his companions in the boat.

"Well, doctor, how is he?" asked young Jack anxiously.

"We came across him just in time to see him die."

"Die!"

"Yes, it is all over."

* * * * *

Hunger and exposure had done their work thoroughly.

They looked about the raft and examined the

bodies for any indication of their names or the name of the ship from which they had come to this piteous end.

But there was nothing to give them the least information.

The doctor got back to the boat and they pulled away slowly and sadly.

"See, see!" exclaimed Harry Girdwood, a moment after.

"What now?"

"The raft has broken up."

And so it had, strangely enough, just after the doctor had left it, and the two grim occupants of the raft slipped over and rolled to their last resting place, the bed of the ocean.

"How horrible," said Harry Girdwood, with a shudder. "I hope that that may not be our fate after all our struggles."

"Amen," responded the doctor, solemnly.

The twilight deepened and the sun set, tinging the whole span of the western horizon with a rich golden hue.

And as they strained their eyes to get the last glimpse of the fragments of the wrecked raft, it looked blood red in the sun.

And as it faded away from view, the sun sank below the horizon.

Darkness was on the face of the waters.

Then their hearts grew heavy, and they drifted away in solemn silence.

And as they fell asleep, they all asked themselves these two questions:

"Shall we ever reach land?"

"Shall we be picked up by a passing ship?"

And filled with dire forebodings, they felt hope abandon them.

The solemnity of the position made them involuntarily superstitious.

In spite of themselves, they looked upon that fatal raft as an omen sent across their path.

The ill-fated Englishman on the raft had just come in sight of succor and had probably died ere he could realize the fact, since his mind was distraught.

Were they, too, destined to reach help when it would be too late?

They feared so.

And this it was that caused them to grow heart, sick.

But sleep came to help them.

Heavenly sleep, the panacea for all our ills.

It was Spirillo's watch that night, and a weary vigil it was for him.

"I made a mistake in joining them," said the Malay to himself. "I ought to have known when I was well off, and staid on board the *Flowery Land*!"

CHAPTER XIX.

SAVED—FATHER AND SON—HIGH JINKS ON BOARD THE "FRANZ JOSEF."

"SHIP ahoy!"

Harry Girdwood awoke with a start.

"Where away?"

"Yonder."

He picked up his glass, and looked eagerly out.

Yes, sure enough there was a ship, and at no very great distance either.

"Shall we wake them up?"

"No; let us signal her first."

"You run up a flag," said Harry Girdwood, "while I fire off the rifle."

The rifle lay ready loaded to hand, so he lifted it, and blazed away into the sky.

At that young Jack and the doctor awoke with a start.

"Halloo!" cried the former, "what's the matter?"

"Ship ahoy!"

"So there is, and not far off. Dear me! and we were getting down in the mouth, too."

"Hurrah!" shouted young Jack, joyfully, "we are saved."

"I hope so; don't be too sanguine, lest our disappointment be proportionate."

"Wisely spoken, doctor," said Spirillo.

"It can't be the *Flowery Land* again."

Spirillo had taken a long, steady look through his glass by now, and he soon put them right upon his point.

"It's no more like the *Flowery Land* than it is like the raft we saw yesterday. Fire the rifle again."

In their eagerness, three of them blazed away now; and by the time that the echo of their own shouts died away, they saw a flash of light on board the ship, a puff of smoke, and then came the deep boom of the answering gun.

"They see us!"

"They signal us!"

"Hurrah!"

They lowered their oars, and pulled away for the ship with a hearty good will.

And presently they were so near that they could see them run their colors up to the mast-head.

"The Union Jack!" shouted Harry Girdwood.

"Let's give it three cheers."

"Hip—hip—hip—hoorah! hip—hip! Why, Spirillo, man alive, you don't seem pleased."

"I—oh, yes!"

"Why, what a half-hearted way of showing your pleasure then."

"The English are notoriously hard on all pirates," said Spirillo, coldly. "What guarantee have I that I am safe?"

"You!" exclaimed young Jack, "why, you're with us, aren't you? Well, that shows you are no pirate. Why, Spirillo, my good friend, the fact of your being with us would make you safe if you were known, which you are not. We shall give no explanation beyond the fact that we have escaped from the *Flowery Land*, you with us."

"All right."

"Give me your hand."

"With all my heart," said Spirillo, reassured.

"See—see; they are lowering a boat!"

This was true.

The ship had now lowered a boat, and it was speedily manned and pulling towards them.

They pulled sharply to meet them, and in the space of a few minutes the two boats were alongside of each other.

"What cheer, my mates?" cried one of the boat's crew; "lost your bearings and drifted away?"

"That's it."

"Is yours a trading ship, my friend?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, your honor, a tea ship," replied one of the sailors, heartily.

"A tea ship."

"Yes."

"Whither bound?" demanded young Jack, eagerly.

"Back to Chaney."

"What is the name of your ship, my man?"

"The *Franz Josef*."

"The what?" almost shrieked young Jack.

The man confirmed his speech with a sort of mild oath, but his speech was drowned by the great din of voices from the ship itself.

And above them all was heard a clear, ringing, manly voice, shouting out:

"Jack—Jack, my own boy Jack! Now Heaven be thanked!"

Jack gave a yell. It was his father!

They scrambled up the ship's side goodness knows how.

All we know is, that young Jack was foremost, and that in less time than it takes to write it, he was being strained to his father's heart, and their eyes were dim with tears of joy.

The two Emilys came running along the deck, and Hilda scudding after them, a good third in a hotly-contested race.

And then there was more hugging and kissing, and everybody laughed and cried all at once.

And as for little Emily, her joy was so great that she quite forgot her lady-like reserve which she was now just beginning to think it proper to assume, and she hugged her young sweetheart before everybody with greater warmth than all the rest.

"Come—come, I say, Miss Emily," said Mr. Jefferson, winking at Harvey, "I think you ought to serve us alike all around."

Little Emily blushed purple and retreated behind her mamma.

"Now, Jack," said the elder Harkaway, "tell me who your friends are—or rather companions."

"Friends, father, friends," corrected young Jack.

"Well, friends."

"Doctor Stanley—our good friend—he saved Harry's life, and mine, too, for the matter of that, as much by his good counsels as anything else."

The speaker's father held out his hand to the American doctor.

"Sir," said he, "you have made yourself our friend for life—and me your eternal debtor. I hope that I may be in a position to requite your goodness."

"Mr. Harkaway," returned the doctor, smiling, "our dear young Jack has overrated my services very greatly. He must have kissed the blarney stone. I am in his debt, on the contrary—in his and that of our young friend and fellow adventurer, Harry Girdwood."

"Doctor!"

"It is so," affirmed the American. "To their energy and indomitable perseverance I owe my presence here—my escape from that floating slaughter house in which I was so long a prisoner."

"The doctor is too kind," said Harry Girdwood, "for without his cool head and his sage advice we should have been ruined and undone twenty times."

"And we must not forget our friend Spirillo."

"Glad to know you, friend Spirillo," grasping

his hand.

The Malay pirate was a bit abashed at this public recognition of his services.

"The lads did all," he said. "They planned it all. I owe them my escape. They owe me nothing."

"But without Spirillo we should never have got away."

"True," said Doctor Stanley. "It was he who provided the means."

"I am bowed down with the weight of the obligations I am under, my good friends, to you," said Jack Harkaway, senior. "May the friendship thus begun last till we have done with life."

"Hurrah!" shouted an enthusiastic tar.

The cry was caught up by the whole of the assembled crew. And a joyous day it was on board of the *Franz Josef*.

In the midst of the excitement, the hand-shaking, kissing and hugging, and the questioning that was going on all around, young Jack did not particularly observe the jolly old salt who led the cheering.

His father led the sailor in question forward.

"An old friend of yours, my dear boy," he said.

The old sailor scraped a bow and pulled his forelock.

"Glad to see your honor back again among us," he said.

"What!" cried young Jack, "my old friend, Ben Hawser? Precious glad to see you, Ben. Tip us your fin."

They shook hands with such evident enjoyment that it made the whole of the bystanders feel a sensation of pleasure, merely to look on.

"Dammie!" cried Ben, "it makes my smeller tingle and the water pump into my lee-scuppers with joy to look at you again, Master Jack, and to think you are safe out of them shark's clutches. Blow my pigtail, if I can hardly believe the evidence of my own blessed toplights; let's feel your flesh again."

And they shook hands with greater warmth than before.

"You ought to have been in that fight with the pirate," said young Jack.

"Well, I dunno," replied old Ben. "With such a vessel as it were according to all accounts, the odds was about the Lord High Admiral to a powder monkey agin you."

"Right."

"But I should vastly like to have about three of them pirates here jest now—only three, and with nothing but a bo'sen's rattan in my paw—damme! I'd make small biscuit of 'em and look on it as dinner, in a manner of speaking!"

The first mate summoned all the crew, and Jack Harkaway, senior, addressed them from the top of a barrel.

"I want to have some small recognition of my boy's return, my men," he said, "and so I have asked the skipper's permission to treat you to a double allowance of grog all around."

"Hurrah!"

"Three cheers!" cried Ben Hawser. "Take the time from me, and give it mouth—one, two, three—hip, hip, hurrah!"

A deafening cheer burst from the crew.

"I would also suggest," said Harkaway, "that we should have a dance."

"Bravo!"

"A dance—a dance!"

"But the serious question of the hour is, have we got a fiddler on board?"

"I should think so," returned Dan, an old sailor, with a look of something approaching scorn at the question arising. "Why, what do you call Ben Hawser?"

"Can Ben play?" said Harkaway, in surprise.

"Ben play?" echoed Dan. "Only like a gilded angel, that's all. Can't he, mates?"

"Ay—ay."

"Well, then," said Harvey, "here's the programme right off."

"First the grog," suggested Mr. Jefferson.

"Yes."

"Then clear the deck for a dance," added Magog Brand.

"Ay—ay."

"Call the grog."

"Here it comes."

"And now," said Jack Harkaway, the elder, "as soon as Ben Hawser tunes up, I'll try if I can get my legs lissome enough to lead off the horn-pipe."

This proposition was greeted with deafening cheers.

Harkaway led off the dance with a will, and every step that is known in association with the hornpipe he could do—ay, and do it to perfection, too.

The tars were delighted.

And when Jack senior was tired, Jack junior had to start off, and he showed himself scarcely less agile than his father.

Then followed Harvey, and Magog Brand came next with Punch's breakdown, which made the crew yell with gratification.

It was a grand festival for the crew.

And the reputation of the Harkaways—father

and son—was from that day wondrously enhanced for the sailors.

They had looked upon them with considerable respect and admiration before; they now regarded them as men of the most exalted genius.

* * * * *

While the festivities proceeded, Mr. Jefferson and Doctor Stanley stood aloof, chatting about the details of the escape.

"It is a remarkable thing," said the doctor, "how apt we are to believe in what we most desire."

"We are."

"Do you know that no sooner did we get sight

of a sail, than young Jack set it down for the *Franz Josef*?"

"Indeed! Well, we came across a bottle containing your message."

"You did?" cried the doctor, in astonishment.

"Yes."

"Now Heaven be thanked!" exclaimed the other, fervently. "Providence was with us."

"It was, indeed," said Mr. Jefferson, seriously; "it is little short of marvelous that we should have picked up one of those bottles after all."

* * * * *

The crew of the *Franz Josef* did not forget that festival for many a long day.

THE END.

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